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Methodism in Canada

ITS WORK AND ITS STORY

BEING THE THIRTY-THIRD FERNLEY LECTURE

DELIVERED IN PENZANCE, 31st JULY 1903

BY

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METHODISM IN CANADA

PROLOGUE

For more than a hundred years the Methodist Church in Canada has been so busy *making* history that no one has had leisure to *write* it. In fact, the time for such an undertaking had not fully come. The period was too short, the events too recent. They might be recorded separately in private or public annals, but could scarcely be combined into history. Within the past few years, however, there has been a growing conviction that Canadian Methodism had reached a stage in its development when the story of its first hundred years should be written; and just at the very time when this conviction began to voice itself, accompanied by some gentle hints as to who ought to undertake the task, the Board of the Fernley Lectureship saw fit to honour me with an invitation to deliver the lecture for 1903, and accompanied that invitation with a request that the theme of the lecture should be the work of the Methodist Church in Canada.

When considering how I might best fulfil the task assigned me, the thought occurred of giving, first of all, a brief statement of what the Methodist Church in Canada is at the present time, and then so much of its story as

would show how it came to be what it is. In doing this it will not be necessary to follow the minute details of a continuous history, but only to present the salient features of certain distinctive epochs when the inner life of the movement gradually took form in visible institutions, and the nebulous materials produced by an aggressive evangelism resolved themselves into a compact and thoroughly organised Church. For be it understood that what I have to relate is not the method whereby men of mingled passions like ourselves planned and reared a Babel-tower to their own ambition, but it is the process of a divine evolution whereby God made them to be a people that were not a people, and raised up the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. To change the figure, I have to tell something of the story of how a grain of mustard seed was planted in unpromising soil, but how in the space of one hundred years it grew into so stately a tree that to-day one million of people, or nearly 20 per cent. of the whole population of the Canadian Dominion, gather under its shadow and are called by its name.

To compress a detailed account of Canadian Methodism into the limits of a Fernley Lecture would be impossible, and it is not necessary to attempt it; but there are, as already intimated, certain well defined epochs in the growth of the denomination which will not be devoid of interest to British Methodists, and some of these I will endeavour to describe. Taken as a whole, it is a story of heroic endeavour inspired by a lofty purpose, with many a romantic incident and a pathos peculiarly its own. It is the story of an intense and aggressive evangelism, seeking the lost sheep in the wilderness and bringing

wandering prodigals home to God; the story of Christ's redeeming love constraining men and women to lives of self-sacrificing devotion unsurpassed in the history of the Church; of marvellous triumphs of divine grace in the transformation of notorious sinners into rejoicing saints, and of happy and useful lives ending on triumphant deathbeds. More than that, it forms an integral part of the story of the spirit of freedom, inspired by the gospel, contending against irresponsible autocracy in civil government and the assumptions of a tyrannical ecclesiasticism in the Church, until the great principles of civil liberty and religious equality were universally conceded and incorporated in the laws of the State; the story of intellectual emancipation, wrought by the gospel, finding its legitimate outlet in the establishment of schools, the founding of colleges, the dissemination of literature, the fostering of intellectual pursuits. Last, but not least, it is the story of a God-inspired movement for the unification of Methodism, prophetic, it may be, of a coming day when throughout Christendom there shall be "one flock, one Shepherd."

I could honestly wish that the task now before me had fallen into other hands; for, altogether apart from that sincerely modest estimate of one's own powers which is proper and becoming, there are other reasons which, in my case, make the undertaking one of no small difficulty. Not only has a very busy life afforded little time for historical or philosophical studies, but for the third part of a century I have been in the thick of the events which make up the later history of Canadian Methodism, and by force of circumstances, more than from choice, have been compelled to share largely in the discussions

out of which grew the present condition and polity of the Church. Such an experience is not the best preparation for the historian. A soldier, it is true, may relate in the most graphic manner certain incidents of a battle as they fell under his observation, yet be poorly qualified to outline the plan of campaign or describe the complicated movement of the entire army. As a war correspondent secures if possible some point of vantage from which he can survey the entire field, so the historian of Church or State must be far enough removed from the events which he describes to be able to survey them as a whole, and to weigh with impartial mind and unbiassed judgment the motives and actions of men. Conscious of my limitations in these respects, I can only attempt my little best, trusting to the interest of my theme and the kindness of my hearers to secure a lenient judgment.

1

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA

The word "Church" is here used deliberately and with emphasis. Methodism in Canada is a Church in all things that the word properly implies. It is a body of Christian believers united by a common name, a common faith, a common history. It accepts the Holy Scriptures as the only authoritative rule of faith, and steadily aims to conform its teaching and practice to the doctrine of Christ. Its symbols of doctrine embrace the fundamental truths held by the Church universal. Its forms of worship are in harmony with New Testament teaching and the practice of the primitive Church. It has a valid ministry, called of God and ordained, by whom the ordinances of the Church of Christ are duly administered. Should anyone demand other evidence of the validity of the claim to be a true Church of Christ, let him find the attesting seal in the mighty works wrought by the Holy Spirit through its instrumentality for more than a hundred years.

In giving an account of this Church and its work some regard must be paid to the theatre of its operations. Geographically considered, the field to be covered is one of vast extent. A Dominion that stretches literally "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth,"

is no "pent-up Utica" whose story might be sketched in a score of pages; and as the theatre of the Church's history is conterminous with so vast an empire, the foundations of the story should be laid on similarly majestic lines. The time limits, it is true, are not far apart—only one hundred years—but into that brief period events of no ordinary importance have been compressed; for the history of Methodism in Canada is, in a very important sense, an integral part of the history of the Dominion, and its annals chronicle a movement which has left an indelible impression upon the people and their institutions. Every careful observer will admit that Methodism has been one of the most potent factors in moulding the character of the people in the English-speaking provinces of the Dominion, and in shaping the destinies of the infant nation.

It will be seen, therefore, that he who would tell the story of Methodism in Canada must not, if true to his vocation, trace the history of a denomination cast in a narrow groove, intent upon its own sectarian theology and usages, indifferent to wider human interests and questions of civic duty and responsibility, but the history of a great evangelistic movement that in the sweep of its far-reaching influence has regenerated individuals, purified homes, transformed communities, moulded institutions, fought and won the battle of civil and religious liberty, shaped the educational policy of whole provinces, founded institutions of higher learning, created a clean and wholesome literature, left the impress of its thought upon the very speech of the people, leavened the theology and stimulated the evangelistic zeal of sister churches, and in the brief space of one hundred years gathered around its standard a million of

adherents, or nearly one fifth of the population of the Dominion.

As already intimated, the field covered by the work of the Methodist Church in Canada is of vast extent. It comprises the settled portions of the Dominion, the island of Newfoundland, the Bermudas, and two strictly foreign missions, one in Japan and one in West China. But these are only vague general statements which convey no distinct meaning, and some comparisons must be instituted if the facts are to be made clear. In attempting a brief description of the field we will begin at the Atlantic seaboard and follow the course of the sun westward to the great Pacific.

Lying off the south-eastern coast of the province of Quebec and the southern extremity of Labrador (from which it is separated by a narrow strait about 15 miles in width) lies the island of Newfoundland, the ancient colony, with an area of 162,200 square miles, which means a territory more than twice the size of England and Scotland put together, and nearly as large as Sweden. Rugged, storm-beaten, much of it rocky and sterile, its aspect is not particularly inviting: but there is vast mineral wealth among the hills; magnificent bays, in any-one of which the combined fleets of the world might ride at anchor without fear of overcrowding, indent its shore-line; while off the coast and out on the banks are teeming fisheries, prolific enough to supply the markets of the world. Outside of the city of St. John's the settlements for the most part are not much more than fishing villages around the rugged coast; but in most of them the gospel is preached with true Methodist fervour, and a

joyous experience is voiced in grand old Wesleyan hymns. Within the bounds of the Conference there are 5 districts, 64 circuits and stations, 52 ordained ministers, 16 probationers for the ministry, 11,851 communicants, and 15,209 scholars in the Sunday schools.

Turning now to the Dominion of Canada (for although Newfoundland, Methodistically, is included in its boundaries, politically it is separate), we have to do with an immensely vaster territory, though some of the provinces composing it are but small. South-westward from Newfoundland we touch the coast of Cape Breton, an island which forms part of the province of Nova Scotia, the Acadie of the old French régime. From north-east to south-west the province has a length of 350 miles, with an average breadth of 90 miles or thereabout; but Nova Scotia being almost an island, connected with the mainland by a very narrow isthmus, and Cape Breton being an island in reality, the coastline is of enormous extent. The whole province comprises an area of 20,550 square miles, nearly equal to the combined area of the States of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The population is nearly 460,000, and for the most part they are a law-abiding and God-fearing people. Methodistically, an Annual Conference has jurisdiction throughout the province. This Conference comprises 10 districts, 110 circuits and stations, 124 ordained ministers, 12 probationers for the ministry, 16,067 communicants, and 15,535 scholars in the Sunday schools. Communicants and adherents combined number 57,500, or about 12½ per cent. of the entire population.

To the north-west of Nova Scotia, across the Bay of

Fundy, lies the province of New Brunswick. It has an area of 28,200 square miles, nearly as large as Bavaria, and about 1,600 square miles less than Scotland. Its population exceeds 321,000, and in their characteristics the people are not unlike those of Nova Scotia. The Annual Conference embraces 8 districts, 92 circuits and stations, 104 ordained ministers, 10 probationers for the ministry, 13,792 communicants, 13,593 scholars in the Sunday schools. Communicants and adherents together number 35,973, or 8½ per cent. of the population, including Prince Edward Island, which is separated from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia by Northumberland Strait, and is included in the territory of the New Brunswick Conference. It has an area of only 2,133 square miles, slightly larger than the State of Delaware, and a population of a little over 109,000, but maintains its own provincial autonomy.

North of New Brunswick, we touch the easterly part of that narrow strip of the province of Quebec which lies south of the St. Lawrence River. At a point approximately east from the city of Quebec the strip begins to widen, following the north-western boundary of the State of Maine and the northern boundaries of the States of New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York, till it strikes the St. Lawrence River at an acute angle at the upper end of Lake St. Francis. On the north shore of the lake the province line between Quebec and Ontario starts near the village of St. Louis de Gonzague, following an irregular course until it reaches the Ottawa River, near Carillon. Thence the boundary between the two provinces follows the course of the Ottawa to a point at the north end

of Lake Temiscamingue; thence it runs due north to a point on James Bay. To the north the boundary of Quebec is the East Main River, which flows westward into James Bay, and the Hamilton or Grand River flowing eastward into the Atlantic Ocean; while to the east the boundary is the narrow strip of the coast of Labrador, which is under the jurisdiction of Newfoundland.

Having entered this immense province, we have now to deal with the territory of an empire—for Quebec has an area of 347,350 square miles, which is 22,600 square miles larger than the German and Austrian empires put together, more than seven times the size of the State of New York, and more than equals the combined areas of the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Within this province lies the head of navigation for ocean ships coming in from the Atlantic, and through the gateways of its cities will pour, through the coming years, the fabulous wealth of the great North-West. Within this province there is a population of 1,648,898, and there is room for millions more. Its land fit for agriculture is not all occupied, its forests are by no means exhausted, its minerals scarcely touched. But of the 1,648,898 people above mentioned, 1,322,000 are of French descent, speak the French language, are imbued with French traditions, and the bulk of them are devoted adherents of the most pronounced, aggressive, and thoroughly organised type of Roman Catholicism to be found in the world.

In this province the work of Methodism is confined almost entirely to the English-speaking portions, and to towns, cities, and rural sections where the population is

mixed. Among the other race the work is represented by a few scattered and somewhat feeble missions, where a handful of French Protestants bravely strive to hold their own against the overshadowing power of Rome. The Annual Conference, called Montreal, embraces the English-speaking portion of the province already referred to, beginning at Gaspé on the Atlantic seaboard, and extending in the other direction some distance west of the city of Kingston, far beyond the Ontario province line. The Conference embraces 11 districts, 219 circuits and stations, 240 ordained ministers, 29 probationers for the ministry, 36,209 communicants, 32,110 scholars in the Sunday schools. Communicants and adherents within the province of Quebec number 42,014.

At the eastern angle formed by the junction of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa there are two counties which belong to the province of Quebec. All west of this to the Detroit River, and thence along the shores of Lakes Huron and Superior to Fort William, and extending northward approximately to the 47th parallel, is included in what is now called Old Ontario; but within a few years a vast territory to the north and west, popularly called New Ontario, has been added. Its northern boundary is the shore of James Bay as far as the Albany River, thence ascending the course of that stream westward till the eastern boundary of Manitoba is reached at the Lake of the Woods. The area of the whole province of Ontario is 222,000 square miles, a territory larger than France, nearly as large as Spain and Portugal combined, and nearly twice the size of Great Britain and Ireland. From the Quebec boundary to the Detroit River the distance,

as the crow flies, is approximately 500 miles; from the shore of Lake Erie to the Albany River the distance is about 750 miles; while the distance from Ottawa to the Manitoba province line is approximately 1,000 miles. The resources of this vast region in agriculture, timber, and especially minerals, are practically boundless, and manufactures are developing at a rate undreamed of a generation ago. The population at the last census numbered 2,167,978. As already intimated, the Montreal Conference extends a considerable distance into Ontario; but west of that, and still within the province, there are four other Annual Conferences, named respectively Bay of Quinte, Toronto, Hamilton, and London. Taken together, these Conferences embrace 53 districts, 739 circuits and stations, 978 ordained ministers, 102 probationers for the ministry, 182,739 communicants, 166,634 scholars in Sunday schools. Communicants and adherents taken together number 666,360.

The province of Manitoba constitutes the first political division of the almost illimitable prairie region of the West. Scarcely more than a generation has passed since this vast country came under the control of the Canadian Government, and it was almost at the end of the sixties when the first missionaries of the Methodist Church were sent to the English-speaking settlers who were beginning to enter the country. Previous to this the Methodist Church had a few missionaries among the Indians of the farther north; but the Scotch settlers on the Red River of the North were cared for by Presbyterian clergymen, while the mixed bloods, scattered over an enormous territory, were dependent for the most part upon the

ministrations of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches.

When the North-West was ceded to Canada, conditions underwent a rapid change. Farmers and others from the older provinces began to turn their faces toward the new land of promise, and the Churches saw the necessity of providing for the religious needs of those who were seeking homes on the Western prairies. In 1868 the Methodist Church sent out the Rev. George Young, D.D., to plant the standard at Fort Garry on the Red River. At first he preached to a handful of people in his own dwelling; but he laid foundations broad and deep, and where in 1868 there was only the naked prairie surrounding the walls of the H.B. Company's Fort, there now stands a handsome city of 50,000 inhabitants, with all the appliances of modern civilisation, while Methodism is represented in the same city by more than half a dozen churches with flourishing congregations, and a large and handsome college building filled with students.

The province of Manitoba is one of the smaller divisions of the North-West, having an area of only 73,956 square miles; but even this is no petty State, as it includes a territory nearly 6,000 square miles larger than Great Britain. This, however, is only the gateway to the greater West. Beyond Manitoba, to the west, north, and north-west, are the vast territories of Assinaboia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Athabasca, Keewatin, Mackenzie, and Yukon. In Keewatin Methodism is represented by two or three Indian missions; in Athabasca and Mackenzie it has no work at all; in the Yukon there are but three ministers of the denomination; but there is a vast net-

work of agencies covering the province of Manitoba and much of the territories of Assinaboia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, known as the Manitoba and North-West Conference. The divisions just named cover the following areas in square miles: Manitoba, 73,936; Assinaboia, 90,340; Saskatchewan, 114,000; Alberta, 100,000. Taken together, the area is 378,276 square miles, which is equal in extent to France and Sweden combined, and almost every square mile is rich agricultural soil. The same may be said of the western half of Athabasca, which, with the outlying territories of Keewatin, Mackenzie, and Yukon, represents an area of 1,768,800 square miles, a region so vast that the whole of Europe, excluding Russia, does not equal it by nearly 250,000 square miles. If now we add together Manitoba and the two groups of territories above named, we have a total of 2,147,096 square miles, which is larger than the whole of Russia in Europe, including Poland and Finland.

In the Manitoba and North-West Conference there are 15 districts, 251 circuits and stations, 241 ordained ministers, 28 probationers for the ministry, 22,392 communicants, 20,355 scholars in the Sunday schools. Communicants and adherents together, 72,117.

We have now reached British Columbia, the most westerly province of the Canadian Dominion. Large in area, it comprises 383,300 square miles, or over 18,000 square miles more than the combined States of California, Nevada, and Oregon. The mountainous character of the whole country does not permit of agriculture on a large scale; but land in the valleys is very fertile, timber resources are immense, the fisheries, especially of salmon,

are prolific almost beyond belief, while the supply of minerals—coal, iron, copper, silver, gold, etc.—are practicably inexhaustible. The Methodist Church in the province comprises 1 Annual Conference, 8 districts, 81 circuits and stations, 69 ordained ministers, 11 probationers for the ministry, 6,116 communicants, 7,088 scholars in the Sunday schools. Communicants and adherents together, 25,021.

Outside of the territory occupied in the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, and Bermuda, the Methodist Church has two foreign missions—one in Japan, the other in West China. The former was begun in 1873 by the Rev. George Cochran, D.D., and the Rev. Davidson Macdonald, M.D. There is now an Annual Conference embracing 5 districts, with 27 circuits and stations, 8 foreign missionaries, 26 ordained native pastors, 7 unordained preachers, 2,675 communicants, 2,236 scholars in the Sunday schools. The West China Mission in the province of Sz' Chuan was begun in 1891 by the Rev. V. C. Hart, D.D., O. L. Kilborn, M.A., M.D., and Rev. George E. Hartwell, B.A., B.D. On two separate occasions the mission has been broken up by the Boxer insurrection, and the missionaries were compelled to leave the province for a time. This greatly retarded the work; but a brighter day seems to be dawning, and the missionaries are again on the ground, labouring with good prospects of success.

Turning back over ground already traversed and summing up results, we find in the Dominion of Canada territory organised and under Government amounting to 3,170,629 square miles, and there is unorganised territory to the north amounting approximately to 500,000

square miles more, or say 3,670,000 square miles in all, which is almost equal to the whole continent of Europe. Of this enormous region a large portion is still unoccupied save by the wandering Indian and the adventurous fur-trader. According to the census of 1901, the population of the Dominion was less than 6,000,000; but with a soil capable of sustaining countless millions more, and undeveloped resources of other kinds enough to enrich the whole world, the filling up of all the country fit for settlement with a prosperous population is only a matter of time, and it is this tide of incoming population that will constitute the great problem of all the Churches for years and years to come.

In the early days Methodism in Canada, so far as its government was concerned, took on the Methodist Episcopal form. This was perfectly natural, for its preachers were commissioned by the American Bishops, and until 1832 were under his jurisdiction. But when, in the year just named, a union was formed between the Canadian Conference and the British Wesleyan Conference, Episcopacy was superseded by an annual Presidency, and the government of the Church was modelled after the Wesleyan type. When a union was formed between the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, the Methodist New Connexion, and the Conference of Eastern British America, some modifications were introduced, and the united body took the name of the Methodist Church of Canada. Nine years later another union was formed, embracing the Methodist Church of Canada, the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, the Primitive Methodist Church in Canada, and the Bible Christian Church of

Canada, and the legal designation adopted was The Methodist Church. At the time of this union the constitution which still exists was adopted, and some of its features may be briefly described.

In some respects the polity of the Canadian Church holds a middle position between British Wesleyan Methodism and the Episcopal Methodism of the United States. It maintains the ministerial equality of the one, and, in a modified form, the general superintendency of the other. There is one Quadrennial General Conference, composed of ministers and laymen in equal numbers, to which is committed authority to make rules and regulations for the whole Church under certain restrictions. The ministerial members are elected by the ministers in the Annual Conferences, and the laymen by the lay members of the same bodies. The General Conference has authority to elect one or more general superintendents, who hold office for eight years and are eligible for re-election. It also decides the number and boundaries of the Annual Conferences, but does not interfere in their internal administration. At the present time there is one Annual Conference in Newfoundland, nine in the Dominion of Canada, and one in Japan. The Annual Conferences are composed of ministers and laymen in equal numbers, the former holding their position *ex officio*, the latter elected by the laymen in the annual district meetings. Each Annual Conference elects its own president and secretary. If a general superintendent is present at the beginning of a session, he opens the proceedings, presides during the first day, and afterwards alternately with the president-elect. He also conducts

the ordination service, when present, and in his absence the president officiates. All questions pertaining to ministerial standing and conduct are decided by the ministerial members of the Annual Conference, and the preachers are stationed by a committee composed of the chairmen of districts and one ministerial representative elected by each district meeting, the president of Conference being chairman. During the intervals between sessions of the General Conference, connexional interests—such as missions, education, publishing, etc.—are controlled by boards or committees, and in these the principle of equality in numbers as between ministers and laymen prevails. Other church courts, such as quarterly official meetings, leaders' meetings, etc., are patterned after the British Wesleyan type. There is one court in the Canadian Church which, as far as I am aware, is unique in Methodism. This is known as the Court of Appeal, and is constituted for the purpose of hearing and deciding appeals from the decisions of lower courts, or officers of the same, on questions of law. This includes appeals from decisions of presidents or presiding officers of Annual Conferences on questions of law; from the decision of Annual Conferences when they have exceeded their jurisdiction; from decisions of general superintendents on questions of law in the committees and boards over which they preside; and from decisions of committees and boards of the General Conference when they have exceeded their jurisdiction.

Among the various departments of work in the Methodist Church that of missions holds foremost place. As far back as 1824, while the Church was yet in its

infancy, a Missionary Society was organised. Its income the first year was only about $144, and the field of operation was correspondingly limited. At that time a foreign mission was undreamed of, but it was thought that something might be done for the scattered bands of Indians in the central and western parts of Upper Canada (now Ontario), whose condition was most deplorable, and ultimately to afford a little aid to those who were carrying the gospel to the remoter settlements. From the time the society was organised until now no division has been made as between the home and foreign work. One fund covers both, and is controlled and administered by one board. This board is composed of the general superintendent, the officers of the Missionary Society, and 34 other members, ministers and laymen in equal numbers, 14 of whom are elected by the General Conference for a four years' term. The board meets annually, reviews the whole mission work of the Church at home and abroad, and apportions the funds at its disposal according to the needs of the various fields. In the intervals of the sessions of the board the business of the society is administered by an executive committee composed of the general superintendent, the officers of the society, and 18 other members, ministers and laymen in equal numbers, appointed by the board.

The Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church was organised in the autumn of 1881. The income for the first year was $2,916; but the annual receipts increased steadily, until in 1902 they reached $49,776. This society has its own board and manages its own affairs, but works in harmony and loyal co-operation

with the board of the General Missionary Society. It has more than 40 agents in its employ—all women—and these include evangelists, teachers, physicians, trained nurses, Bible-women, etc. The property held by the Women's Society exceeds in value $56,000. Besides its direct work in the mission field, the society has rendered invaluable service in the home churches in fostering the missionary spirit, spreading information, cultivating systematic giving, and furnishing an outlet for the zeal of consecrated women, who on many different fields are proving their fitness for every form of Christian service. Another branch of missionary effort, and one of growing importance, is what is known as the Young People's Forward Movement for Missions. It is carried on through the agency of the Epworth Leagues, under the direction of the General Board of Missions. The motto of the movement is "Pray, Study, Give," and from this may be inferred the character and spirit of its work. By its campaign methods, diligence in circulating missionary literature, careful study of missionary problems, and plan of systematic giving, this organisation has done much to develop the missionary spirit in the churches. Although but a few years have passed since the movement began, the annual income has reached about $25,000, and 46 missionaries in the Indian and foreign fields are supported, in whole or in part, from this source.

In the councils and work of the Church an important place is assigned to educational interests. The Methodist Church does not concern itself with primary education (except in its Indian and foreign work) as that is amply provided for by a State system of common schools; but at

an early period it led the way in higher education, having established in Upper Canada the first college with university powers. Since that time Canadian Methodism has established and maintained 13 additional educational institutions, 1 of which ranks as a university, 11 as colleges, and 1 as an academy. All this is exclusive of the educational work carried on by the Missionary Society, which includes 19 day schools, 4 boarding schools, and 4 industrial institutes among the Indians, under the joint supervision of the Methodist Church and the Indian department of the Canadian Government, a French institute in the city of Montreal, and sundry schools in the foreign field. The total value of all college and school property owned by the denomination in 1902 was over $2,000,000; and this does not include the school property of the Women's Missionary Society, which aggregates $56,000 more.

The publishing interests of Canadian Methodism have grown steadily from the beginning, and have now attained large proportions. The quadrennial report for 1902 shows total assets amounting to over $640,000, a working capital of $423,000, and net profits for the quadrennium amounting to $85,000. A portion of the profits—about $12,000 annually — is donated to the Superannuated Ministers' Fund, and the remainder goes to increase working capital. The various publications—weekly, monthly, etc.—aggregate nearly 350,000 for a single issue.

STATISTICS OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CANADA.

A brief *résumé* of the preceding facts, so far as they can be tabulated, may be useful for purposes of reference:

General Conference	1
Annual Conferences	11
Ministers, including probationers	2,030
Local preachers	2,248
Exhorters	1,119
Class-leaders	6,791
Church members, including those on trial	291,895
„ and adherents, as per census	935,000[1]
Number of churches	3,413
Seating capacity	865,500
Value of churches and furnishings	$11,836,410
Number of parsonages	1,208
Value of parsonages	$1,875,853
Universities, colleges, and other schools, including those maintained by the Missionary Society and the Women's Missionary Society	27
Value of college and school property	$2,056,000
Sunday schools	3,425
Officers and teachers	33,396
Scholars	276,566
Epworth Leagues and other young people's societies	1,523
Active members	27,309
Associate members	20,952
Raised by Church for connexional funds, 1902	$461,943
„ „ circuit purposes	$1,459,448
„ „ ministerial support	$854,432
Grand total raised for all purposes	$2,775,823

Such, in brief, is the standing and strength of the Methodist Church in Canada at the present time. With no cause for boasting, but much for gratitude, she faces the

[1] Approximate.

responsibilities of the coming century, strong in faith and in the confident expectation that at the end of another hundred years she will be able to say with undiminished emphasis, "The best of all is, God is with us." Meanwhile let us recall some historical epochs that may serve as milestones to mark the route and the distance travelled.

II

PIONEER DAYS

As a skilled biographer attaches a good deal of importance to heredity, and sometimes begins by describing the characteristics of his hero's ancestry, so he who would tell the story of Methodism in Canada should keep in mind the source from which it sprang. For he is not like a traveller in some unexplored region who suddenly finds himself upon the banks of an unknown stream, and straightway follows whithersoever it may lead until its tributary waters join some vaster flood. Rather does he resemble one afloat upon a stream that has been diverged from its parent river and is flowing onward in a channel of its own toward the distant sea. He must breast this diverging current upward to the point of separation from the larger stream, and then in turn trace that larger stream upward to the distant springs where it has its birth.

The true starting-point, then, for the story of Canadian Methodism is not at Adolphustown, where the first class-meeting in Canada was regularly organised, neither is it the site of the old sail-loft in John Street, New York, nor the spot where stood the homes of the Hecks and the Emburys. The historian must go farther afield. The Meccas of his pilgrimage (there are more than one) will be

the rectory at Epworth where a devoted mother in Israel lends her son to God, as did Hannah, that he may be "established to be a prophet of the Lord"; the room of the Holy Club at Oxford, where a few young men, singular enough in their habits to be known even then as Methodists, spend their evenings in studying the Greek New Testament, and such spare time as they can command in visiting those that are sick or in prison; the place of a society meeting in Aldersgate Street where one who has sought in vain to be justified by the deeds of the law suddenly feels his heart "strangely warmed" by a heavenly fire; the Foundery, Moorfield, or Gwennap Pit, where "a man sent from God whose name was John" proclaims the rediscovered evangel "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," and that "being justified by faith we have peace with God"; the church at Madeley where the seraphic Fletcher both preached and lived the higher life of faith, and the rectory where he wrote his famous "Checks," which stemmed the flood of Antinomianism that threatened to submerge the infant Church. These be some of the places where we must search for the hidden springs of that mighty river the streams whereof have made glad many a barren wilderness.

Having discovered the source of the great movement, one is tempted to dwell on the salient features of its development for the first fifty years: its mission to the highways and hedges; the beginning of its restless itinerancy; the origin of its class-meetings; the crystallizing of its theology; the founding of its educational work; the planting of the seed from which has grown the stately tree of its literature; the methods by which it solved the

problem—which to-day seems to be insoluble—how to reach the masses; and last, but by no means least, the beginnings of its far-reaching missionary plans, conceived in the very spirit of the famous dictum, "The world is my parish." Following this, some reference to the rise and growth of Methodism in the American colonies would be in place: the arrival of the Palatine emigrants, and their endeavours to rekindle a fire that was wellnigh quenched; the appeal to Wesley; the coming of Boardman and Pilmoor; the ordination of Thomas Coke; the itinerating labours of Francis Asbury, rivalling in extent and zeal those of Wesley himself; the story of the Christmas Conference, where the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church assumed form and substance; the adoption of Episcopacy as the type of American Methodism; the founding of a publishing-house; the rapid development of the itinerant system, leading up to the time when a branch of the goodly tree "ran over the wall" and took root in that wilderness which was destined to become in the fulness of time the Dominion of Canada. But all this by the way, as its only object would be to show that Canadian Methodism, in its spirit and aims, in its doctrines, methods, and usages, is a legitimate descendant of British Wesleyan Methodism.

To fix the exact date when Methodism had its beginning in any locality is almost as difficult as to fix the moment when a seed begins to germinate, or the new life begins to dawn in the soul. Speaking broadly, however, Methodism may be said to have begun in Newfoundland with the advent of Lawrence Coughlan in 1765; in Nova Scotia with the coming of the Yorkshire

emigrants in 1772; in Lower Canada with the preaching of Tuffey, a commissary of the 44th Regiment, in 1780; and in Upper Canada with the coming of the Hecks and others to the banks of the St. Lawrence in 1778 (some accounts say 1774). Years elapsed before regularly appointed preachers took up the work; but it is more than likely that, in some cases, especially in Nova Scotia and Upper Canada, neighbourhood exhortations and prayer-meetings prepared the way for the coming of the itinerants.

1. Pioneer Days in the Canadas

The conquest of French Canada by British forces may be said to date from the capture of Quebec by General Wolfe in 1759. It is true that one hundred and thirty years earlier Champlain had surrendered Quebec to "Admiral" David Kirke, and the city, together with the vast but scarcely explored country of which it was the key, passed into English hands; but three years later it was restored again to France. For a long time it was a mystery why this was done, but subsequently the mystery was solved by the discovery of a letter from King Charles of England to Sir Isaac Wake, his Ambassador at Paris. The dowry promised to Queen Henrietta Maria, amounting to 800,000 crowns, had been but half paid, and Charles, who was at strife with his Parliament, and in sore need of money, instructed his Ambassador that when he received the balance of the dowry, and not till then, he was to restore to France Quebec and Port Royal, both of which had been captured by Kirke. Thus for a sum equal to

about $240,000, Charles entailed on Great Britain and her Colonies a century of bloody wars.[1] But although Quebec had fallen, England's conquest was not completed, and it was not until 1763 that Canada was formally ceded to England by the Treaty of Paris, and the French flag disappeared from a country it had held for more than two hundred years.

On the conquest of Canada, George III. appointed General Murray to be the first Governor, and with him was associated a council of eight to advise in the affairs of Government. The second Governor was Sir Guy Carleton, appointed in 1768. In 1773 the population was estimated at 100,000 French Roman Catholics and 400 Protestants, the latter consisting chiefly of English merchants, officers and disbanded soldiers, residing for the most part in Quebec and Montreal. Free grants of land were offered by the Government to officers and soldiers who had served under Wolfe, but few availed themselves of the privilege. In the rural parishes there were but nineteen Protestants, and the soldiers preferred to keep public-houses or follow some handicraft rather than clear forests and cultivate the soil. For eleven years Quebec continued under the system of Government established by the proclamation of George III.; and although it provided for the summoning of general assemblies, no such assembly was ever called, as the French-Canadian population were unwilling to subscribe to the test oath. In 1774 the Parliament of England interfered for the first time in Canadian affairs, and by the passage of the Quebec Act modified con-

[1] Parkman's *Pioneers of France in the New World*, "Champlain," ch. xvi. xvii.

siderably the system of government and greatly extended the boundaries of the province.

In 1775 the revolutionary war was in actual progress, and Canada was invaded by troops from the revolting American colonies under Generals Schuyler, Arnold, and Montgomery. For a time a series of successes encouraged the invaders. Fort St. John fell, Chambly was captured, Montreal surrendered, Sorel was occupied, and before the year Quebec was invested. But here the tide turned. Desperate efforts to take the city by assault were repulsed. Arnold failed to reach the lower town, and a sortie of the defenders cut off nearly the whole of his column, he himself escaping in a wounded condition. Montgomery was killed at the second entrenchment of the lower town, and his troops retired in confusion. In the following May relief came from England, and the Americans withdrew to Sorel, followed by British troops. Subsequently they abandoned all the posts down to Lake Champlain, leaving Canada as it had been before the invasion.[1] In 1783 the revolutionary war came to an end, but during its progress, and immediately after, a great many sympathisers with the British cause found their way to Nova Scotia and to Canada. Many had to sacrifice nearly all their possessions, and reached their new home at the cost of great privation. Some came by way of the sea and up the St. Lawrence, some through the unbroken forests between the settled parts of New York State and the province ine. Six weeks were consumed in the voyage to Quebec. In proceeding up the river supplies were hauled against the current in boats, by sheer strength of muscle. To

[1] G. Bryce, *Short History of Canadian People*, ch. vi.

accommodate these refugees, the Government resolved to open up the western part of Canada, then an almost unbroken wilderness. A few emigrants had settled on the banks of the St. Lawrence from Cornwall to Brockville, along the Bay of Quinte from Kingston to Bath, and some French near the Detroit River. The work of surveying was pushed forward, and to encourage further immigration from the United States the Government offered liberal gifts of land. It is estimated that during the period referred to not less than ten thousand loyalists came into Canada from the United States, while an equal number found their way to different parts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

It was not till 1791 that Quebec was divided into two provinces, designated respectively Upper and Lower Canada. The Bill for this purpose was introduced into the English Parliament by Pitt, and after its adoption became known as the Constitutional Act of 1791. It provided that in each province there should be a Governor, a Legislative Council, and Legislative Assembly. In Upper Canada the Legislative Council was to consist of not less than seven, and in Lower Canada not less than fifteen members, chosen by the King for life, while the Speaker was appointed by the Governor-General. In the Legislative Assembly Upper Canada had sixteen members, and Lower Canada fifty. The new Constitution was a step —a short one, it may be—in the direction of popular government, but it did not prove a success. Between a popular Assembly and an irresponsible Council there was sure to be conflict, and in Lower Canada this was aggravated by race antagonism between French and English.

Discontent increased from time to time till it culminated in the rebellion of 1837.[1]

In 1784 the population for both provinces was about 120,000, an increase of 20,000 in ten years. Of the whole, about 10,000 were in Upper Canada, scattered in small settlements along the St. Lawrence and the Niagara frontier. Taking the various colonies together—Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Upper and Lower Canada—the population, though sparse, was somewhat heterogeneous in its character: hardy fishermen from the coasts of Ireland, Cornwall, and Devon; crofters from Scottish isles; farm labourers from English dales; small farmers from half the counties of Great Britain; toilers from the cities, and many who knew not the meaning of toil, but were compelled by declining fortunes to seek for new chances in a new world; prodigal sons hasting to a far country, glad to get away from home restraints, and from the unspoken reproaches of sorrowful fathers and mothers. But among these were to be found immigrants of a different type: scholars from famous universities; retired officers from the army and navy; soldiers from disbanded regiments; sturdy yeomen and hard-handed mechanics; men of brawn and brain, and women of culture and refinement and clean moral fibre. All these braved the dangers of wind and wave and the perils of an unknown wilderness, resolute in their purpose to find a home where they need call no man master, and where they might bequeath to their children a heritage of freedom and hope, of intelligence and comfort, beyond what would have been possible in the land from which they came.

[1] Munro's *Constitution of Canada*, ch. ii.

One cannot fail to recognise the guiding hand of God in timing the advent of the Methodist itinerants to the condition and needs of the people. Not only were the latter few in number, but they were scattered over a vast territory in lonely cabins and isolated settlements, often connected by no better highway than a cattle track or a blazed trail through miles of lonely forest. Of mail communication there was little, and it required almost the proceeds of a day's labour to pay the postage on a letter from a distant place. The press had scarce begun the work of diffusing universal information, and its feeble incipient attempts failed to reach the dwellers in the remoter wildernesses. As yet the schoolmaster was not abroad, and "the sound of the church-going bell" was never heard in the forest solitudes. A people so circumstanced were sure to retrograde unless reached by some counteracting influence. They were in danger of relapsing into semi-barbarism and becoming utterly godless. And such would have been the fate of many but for the advent of the Methodist itinerant. To him it was given to reach the scattered and lonely settlers, as no other agency could have reached them; to arouse the conscience of the careless and cheer the soul of the distressed; to "convince . . . of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," and to point the sin-burdened to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." For the most part the men of the old "saddle-bag brigade" could boast of but little culture. They were not learned in the wisdom of the schools; what they knew, however, they knew thoroughly, and their knowledge embraced the essentials. Their theology was not broad, but it was deep

and high—deep as the ruin into which man had fallen, high as the heaven to which he might ascend; and every truth they taught was a direct spiritual force for the conversion of men and their upbuilding in holiness of life. What marvel, then, if the man who sought "these few sheep in the wilderness" with such a message was welcomed by many as an angel from heaven?

To laymen belongs the honour of introducing for the first time the doctrines and usages of Methodism into many of the colonies of the New World. Embury in New York, Strawbridge in Maryland, Coughlan in Newfoundland, Black in Nova Scotia, Tuffey and Neal in Canada, are all illustrations in point. Coughlan, it is true, was one of Wesley's itinerants, but at the time of his first visit to Newfoundland he was only a lay preacher. Tuffey was a commissary of the 44th Regiment, which was stationed at Quebec in 1780, and was also a Methodist local preacher. That his heart should have been stirred by the religious destitution of the people need excite no surprise. The French, it is true, had their priests and their parish churches, which they faithfully attended, but the Protestant population was poorly cared for. An Episcopal clergyman resided in Quebec and one in Montreal, but other ministers there were none, except, perhaps, a chaplain connected with a regiment. Tuffey, perceiving the state of the soldiery and the Protestant immigrants, began preaching soon after his arrival, but no society seems to have been formed. When peace was proclaimed in 1783, some regiments were disbanded, among others the 44th, and Tuffey returned home; but of the seed he had sown some fell on good ground and ultimately brought forth fruit.

Those who had listened to his preaching, and were afterwards scattered through various settlements, were prepared to listen to similar preaching from others in afteryears, to whom it was given to reap where Tuffey had sowed.

The work done by Tuffey at Quebec was duplicated on the Niagara frontier by Major George Neal. He was an Irishman, as were many of the pioneer preachers in the New World, and an officer in a British cavalry regiment that had served during the revolutionary war. In 1786 he came to Canada, crossing the Niagara River at Queenston, and took possession of an officer's grant of land. At that early day religious privileges were almost unknown, the scattered settlers gave scant heed to spiritual things, and Major Neal might easily have settled down into a similar indifference, devoting all his time and attention to his temporal concerns. But he was a good man and zealous for the gospel, and was no sooner settled in his new possessions than he began to preach to his neighbours. Some received the word with gladness, others with the dislike so characteristic of the unregenerate heart; but he persevered, and had the satisfaction of knowing that his labours were not altogether in vain.

Two years after Major Neal began preaching on the Niagara frontier, two lay workers appeared among the Bay of Quinte settlements. The first was a young man named Lyons, an exhorter in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, who came to Canada and taught a school in the township of Adolphustown. He saw that the people were as sheep without a shepherd, and his compassion was stirred by their spiritual destitution. He

collected the people in different neighbourhoods, and on the Lord's day sang and prayed and exhorted; he also visited the people in their homes, and prayed with them when opportunity was given. These efforts were not without effect, and some were turned from sin to God. In the same year (1788) James M'Carty (another Irishman) came to Canada from the United States by way of Kingston. At Ernestown he found a few Methodists, who encouraged him to hold meetings in their houses. M'Carty had been converted under the preaching of Whitefield during his last visit to America, and seemed to have caught something of the spirit of the great evangelist. His speech and manner were attractive, and considerable numbers attended his preaching; but here, as elsewhere, Methodism had to fight its way to victory. There was resolute opposition to M'Carty's preaching, and that not only from "the baser sort"; men of position and influence were the most pronounced in their antagonism.

The fact is, the loyalists, as they were termed, while possessing many admirable qualities, were by no means advanced in their notions of either civil or religious liberty. Most of them were nominally adherents of the Church of England, and very bigoted at that; hence for a layman and a Methodist to preach the gospel was an innovation not to be endured. Better, they seemed to think, that the people should be without preaching altogether than obtain it from such a source. Prominent among the opponents were three men—a sheriff, a captain of militia, and an engineer — who resolved to get rid of the obnoxious preacher in some way. One Sunday while M'Carty was preaching in the house of Robert Perry, four armed men

came up and rushed into the house to seize the preacher and carry him to Kingston Jail; but the congregation would not allow this, and as Perry agreed to give bail for M'Carty's appearance the men went away. The next day Perry conveyed the preacher to the sheriff at Kingston, but he refused to have anything to do with him. Under some false plea, however, M'Carty was arrested and imprisoned, but was soon liberated again under bail and returned home. When the bail expired M'Carty returned to Kingston. In the meantime, it would seem, his enemies had matured their plans. Instead of being tried before a proper tribunal, he was seized by a band of ruffians, thrown into a boat in charge of four Frenchmen, who conveyed their prisoner through the Lake of the Thousand Islands to the vicinity of the first rapid. At that part of the river are many islands, at that time densely wooded and uninhabited. On one of these M'Carty was left by his captors, and was never seen again. It is but right to say that there is another version of the latter part of this tragic story. It is conceded that the four Frenchmen took M'Carty down the St. Lawrence, and endeavoured to leave him on a desolate island; but owing to his resistance they were induced to leave him on the main shore, whence he made his way to his family and friends. It is also affirmed that he had secured the goodwill of Sir John Johnson, who furnished him with the money to prosecute those who had persecuted him, and a lawyer at Montreal assured him of a successful suit. But while on his way to Montreal, or returning (it is uncertain which), he suddenly disappeared, and was seen no more. The last place where he was seen was near the Long Sault, and the cause of his

disappearance is shrouded in mystery. I incline to the belief that this latter account is the correct one.

But what of those who had persecuted this man for no other cause than that he had preached the gospel to those for whose souls no man cared? The engineer who ordered the Frenchmen to leave M'Carty on a desolate island survived the outrage for only eight or ten days; Sheriff L.—to whom Mr. Perry said at the time of the commitment, "You may kill M'Carty, but a hundred more will rise at his burial whom you or your party cannot kill"—died suddenly in the course of two or three weeks; Captain C., who was most active in M'Carty's persecution, afterwards wrote a confession stating that he had wrongfully and wickedly persecuted an innocent man, and requested Mr. Perry to present the confession to the judge; but the judge replied, "It is a concern of his own, and he alone must see to it." This Captain C. afterwards fell into a state of insanity which continued until his death.[1] A series of occurrences so remarkable cannot be classed under the head of "accidents," and taken in connexion with M'Carty's disappearance when on a journey to seek for legal redress, afford a suggestive commentary on the words, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Some time during the seventies several of the Palatine families who had been identified with the first Methodist society in New York came to Canada, and ultimately settled in the township of Augusta, west of where the town of Prescott now stands. They had removed from New York City to Camden, N.Y., in 1770; but their

[1] Meacham's *Rise and Progress of the Methodist Church*, pp. 448, 449.

strong loyalist proclivities led them to seek a home in Canada, where they arrived in 1774, and located near Montreal. In 1778 they came to Upper Canada, as above stated. Among these Palatine immigrants were Paul Heck, his wife Barbara (whose earnest remonstrances fired the flagging zeal of Philip Embury, and led to the foundation of the first Methodist society in America), and their three sons; John Lawrence, who had married the widow of Philip Embury; David Embury, brother of Philip; and others. These formed a class among themselves, of which a son of Philip Embury became the leader. Paul Heck died in 1792, and Barbara Heck in 1804, and they lie side by side in the burying-ground of the "Old Blue Church" in the front of Augusta township.

The religious condition of the whole country at this time was simply deplorable. There were but three or four Presbyterian ministers in the whole of Canada, and possibly about as many ministers of the Anglican Church; and if contemporary testimony is to be trusted, the example and influence of some of the clergy did not conduce to vital godliness. It is related that a godly man, who opposed vain and sinful amusements, happened to meet the clergyman of his vicinity, who abruptly accosted him with the words, "You are going to hell." "And how do you know that?" mildly inquired the other. "Ah, I'm sure of it," was the reply, "for you run out against dancing, card-playing, and horse-racing, and you'll go to hell for it." If the adage "like priest like people" be true, it need not surprise us to hear Sheriff L., who was concerned in the M'Carty affair, declare that "there

should be no religious worship established but that of the Church of England."[1] No wonder that one of the old settlers should have said in after-years, "For some years together it appeared as though there were neither law nor religion in all the country."

The need of a vital gospel among a people so circumstanced cannot be gainsaid, and this want it now pleased God to supply through the coming of the Methodist itinerants. The first to enter Upper Canada was William Lossee. Of his younger days nothing definite is known, but in 1789 he was received on trial for the itinerant work, enrolled in Freeborn Garrettson's pioneer band, and sent to Lake Champlain under a superintendent. His work does not appear to have been successful, as next year his name does not appear in connexion with any circuit. Possibly the fact that he had been known as a loyalist had something to do with it. At the Conference of 1790 he was allowed to "range at large," and it was then that he decided to visit Canada. Crossing the St. Lawrence, probably at St. Regis, he proceeded up the north bank, preaching on the way at points in Matilda, Augusta, and Elizabethtown; then up to Kingston and on to Adolphustown, where his friends and acquaintances lived. Having preached a few times along the Bay of Quinte, he spoke of returning to the United States; but the people having again heard a gospel to which they had long been strangers, were anxious for the continuation of such ministrations. Accordingly a petition was drawn up and numerously signed praying the New York Conference to appoint a missionary to these new townships. Lossee carried the

[1] Meacham's *History*, pp. 445–47.

petition to the Conference, and volunteered for service in Canada. Bishop Asbury concurred, and Lossee was sent with instructions to form a circuit. Delaying until the ice was strong enough on the river to allow a horse to cross, Lossee set out on his journey, following the course of the loyalist emigrants through the wilderness of western New York. For weeks he rode in the cold winter weather "through a country almost without roads and nearly without inhabitants, crossed the frontier at Kingston, and appears to have been safely in Adolphustown again in the month of February."[1]

At that time Lossee was about twenty-seven years of age, tall and active, and, despite a shrivelled arm, a fearless horseman. As a preacher he belonged to the exhorting dispensation, fluent, impassioned, fearless, denunciatory—a veritable "son of thunder." His sermons were searching and awakening to the last degree, sweeping away the "refuge of lies" behind which sinners tried to hide, and bringing them face to face with the realities of death and the judgment. Such gifts were eminently necessary among a careless and godless people, and the awakening which followed Lossee's preaching was deep and widespread. The circuit which he formed extended along the Bay of Quinte to its uppermost settlements, and embraced the settled parts of Ernestown, Fredericksburg, and Adolphustown. Societies were formed in various places, and together with the erection of several churches (chapels they were called in those days) gave the work an aspect of permanence. Crossing the Bay of Quinte, Lossee preached the gospel in the townships of Marysburg and

[1] Playter's *History of Methodism in Canada*, p. 23.

Sophiasburg, in what is now Prince Edward County, and laid the foundation upon which future labourers might build.

The first Methodist church erected in this region, or indeed in Canada, was on the farm of Paul Huff, on the shore of Hay Bay. Two miles west lived a widow lady named Roblin, with her family of four sons and four daughters, and there Lossee made his home. Returning from a meeting at Paul Huff's the preacher asked one of the Roblin young men how he felt. "Oh," was the flippant reply, "what I heard was only as the tinkling of a bell; it went in at one ear and out of the other." "But I know something," said the preacher, "which is not like a bell and will make you feel." "What is that?" said young Roblin. "Death," answered Lossee in his most solemn tone. The reproof struck home. The next Sunday the youth was found at the meeting, burdened with a sense of sin and fears of death and the judgment; but from the meeting he went home rejoicing in the pardoning mercy of God. Going to his room he returned with a frilled shirt—an article of adornment much affected by gay young men who could afford it—and said to his mother, in the presence of the rest of the family, "Mother, as soon as you can, take off these frills from my shirts. I shall wear such no more. Mother, the Lord has converted my soul this morning. Oh, let us all kneel down and pray!" Afterwards he went to William Moore's, a mile distant, and exhorted and prayed with the family, leaving an impression that resulted in the conversion of Moore, who subsequently became a class-leader. The incident of the shirt-frill may appear amusing or even grotesque; but

remembering that young Roblin was a leader in dancing and other frivolities of the times, the discarding of the shirt-frill simply meant cutting loose from all his sinful associations, in which view the grotesqueness disappears. And after all, "frills" of any kind, whether literal or metaphorical, do not comport very well with vital godliness.

At the meeting of the New York Conference in 1792, Lossee reported 165 as having been received into church fellowship, and pleaded so earnestly for an ordained minister on the circuit that Darius Dunham was appointed, and the name changed from Kingston to Cataraqui. Lossee was appointed to a new circuit, to which was given the Indian name of Oswegotchie. This field was on the north bank of the St. Lawrence, beginning at a point about 50 miles east of Kingston, and extending all the way to Cornwall, a distance of 60 or 70 miles, and embraced the settled portions of the townships of Elizabethtown, Augusta, Edwardsburg, Matilda, Williamsburg, Osnabruck, and Cornwall. The two preachers came together from the Conference, and before parting arranged to hold a Quarterly Conference on the Cataraqui circuit, according to the practice elsewhere. The news soon spread over the entire circuit, and on Sunday, 15th September 1792, the first quarterly meeting that ever took place in Canada was held in Mr. Parrot's barn in the township of Ernestown. It was to all an occasion of profound interest and deep solemnity. For the first time the converts received the sacramental bread and wine from the hands of their own pastors, and great was their rejoicing.[1] Though they

[1] Playter's *History*, p. 35.

knew it not, that first quarterly meeting was an epoch hour of great significance in the history of Canadian Methodism.

Within the bounds of Lossee's new circuit were some German settlements, with a Lutheran pastor of their own. Among them was a good woman whose children were converted and joined the Methodist Church. The mother thought because she had been baptized and had received the sacrament she was a Christian; but her children, in the zeal of their new-found experience, told her that unless she was born again and knew her sins forgiven she would be lost. In great indignation, and perhaps with some alarm, she betook herself to her pastor: "Mr. Schwartzfayer, my childern says dot I must be porn akain, and know my sins forgifen." To which the pastor replied, "What now, mother, have I been preaching to you so long and you have not found that out yet?" From which it may be inferred that this good German pastor knew something of the new birth if his parishioner did not.

In 1791, as previously stated, an Act of the Imperial Parliament divided Canada into two provinces—Upper and Lower Canada. This division was made partly to prevent dissensions between French and English, and each province was to have its own Legislature. In many respects the new arrangement was an advantage; but the Imperial Act contained at least one provision that became a source of strife and contention for many a long day. An allotment of one-seventh of the Crown Lands (afterwards called the Clery Reserves) was made for the support of the Protestant religion. Provision

was also made for a rectory in every township. At this time the population of Upper Canada was about 20,000, "scattered along the St. Lawrence from Lake St. Francis to Kingston, thence around the Bay of Quinte, along the Niagara frontier, at Amherstburg on the Detroit River, in the French settlement on the Thames, and in the Iroquois or Six Nations settlement on the Grand River."[1] When Governor Simcoe arrived in 1792, there was no town in the whole province; a small village at Kingston and another at the mouth of the Niagara River were all. At the latter place, called Newark (afterwards Niagara, and now Niagara-on-the-Lake), Simcoe fixed his residence, and here the first Parliament of Upper Canada assembled on 17th September 1792. The house consisted of sixteen members, farmers and traders for the most part. A number of useful Acts were passed, and after a five weeks' session the Governor prorogued the House, saying in his closing address, "I cannot dismiss you without earnestly desiring you to promote, by precept and example, among your respective counties, the regular habits of piety and morality, the surest foundations of all private and public felicity."

The second session of this Parliament was convened in May of the following year. Among a number of useful Acts adopted there are two that call for a passing notice; the one because it throws light upon the circumstances of the country in regard to religious ordinances, the other because it shows that the principles of civil liberty were even then taking deep root in the hearts of the people. "Marriages publicly contracted before any magistrate, or

[1] Playter's *History*, p. 29.

commanding officer of a fort, or adjutant, or major of a regiment acting as chaplain, or any other person in any other public office or employment," were declared valid, while for the future a magistrate was authorised to perform marriages if there were less than five ministers in the district, or none living within eighteen miles of the persons to be married. The second Act referred to set out with the unanswerable preamble, "Whereas it is unjust that a people who enjoy freedom by law should encourage the introduction of slaves," and went on to enact that hereafter no negro should be imported as a slave. To provide for the gradual emancipation of others, it was enacted that all children hereafter born of negro women were to remain in possession of their owners until twenty-five years of age, when they were to be discharged. Thus "ten years before slavery was abolished in Lower Canada, and forty years before the British Parliament abolished it in the West Indies, the farmer legislation of Upper Canada had struck a deathblow to the great oppression."[1]

When the Rev. Dr. Mountain, the first Anglican Bishop of Quebec, reached his extensive diocese, which then comprised the whole of Canada, he found only five Episcopalian congregations throughout the whole extent. To care for a scattered population of 20,000 souls or more in Upper Canada there were but three or four Episcopalian ministers, two or three Lutheran, and two Methodist. In 1825 the Rev. John Strachan, D.D., first Anglican Bishop of Toronto, referring to that early period, said that among the Protestants of Lower Canada "some

[1] Playter.

congregations might be found, but the western part of the diocese, in regard to religion and education, presented a dreary waste. The people were scattered over a vast surface, and had the means been furnished of building churches and schoolhouses, which ought always to go together, there was little or no chance of their being supported. Nor did this arise so much from any disinclination on the part of the people as from their inability. In new settlements families live of necessity far apart; they are for some years so wretchedly poor that they cannot dispense with the services of their children who are able to work; and if a church is erected, the families are for a long time too remote and the roads too bad to attend. Settlers in a wilderness are often found greatly changed in a few years. At first they lament their distance from churches and schools, but by degrees such lamentations die away, as well as the generous and noble disposition from which they emanated; and when the accommodations for public worship are provided, bad weather, bad roads, or any other trifling cause, prevents anything like a regular attendance. Living without restraint, and without the eye of those whom they respect, a sense of decency and religion frequently disappear. Here the disinclination to holy things presents itself in all its deformity, a distaste for divine worship and neglect of everything sacred, and a total estrangement from God; and although, from their situation, crimes against society are few, the heart becomes entirely dead to true piety and virtue. Were it not for the mothers, nothing engaging or amiable would remain in many of the back settlements; but they, lamenting their separation from civilised society,

are still anxious to cherish and inculcate some of the principles of social life." [1]

It does not seem to have occurred to the good Bishop that conditions so unusual demanded unusual methods, and that the Methodist itinerancy supplied the very agency that was needed. When tidings reached Bishop Asbury that settlements were extending in the remoter wilderness of the United States or Canada, he simply appointed a man to the unknown region with instructions to "go and form a circuit." There was no promise of salary, or any provision for it; but every man so appointed went forth without a moment's hesitation, trusting in Him who feeds the ravens to supply food to eat and raiment to put on, and more they did not ask. True, the raiment was often of the coarsest, and food was sometimes scant, yet these heroic souls were seldom if ever known to murmur, but rejoiced in tribulation if only they might win souls to Christ. The discipline of the period allowed a preacher the munificent salary of $64 a year, and the second General Conference ordained that the preacher's wife should be entitled to a similar amount — provided they could get so much, which they seldom did. Add to this the long, toilsome, and often dangerous journeys, the hardships and exposure, the frequent and protracted separations from home and family, the opposition of the godless, the indifference of many, the impossibility of making any provision for old age, should they be spared so long, and the only wonder is that men could be found willing to devote themselves to such a calling under such conditions. Many of the pioneer preachers could have

[1] Sermon on the death of the Rev. Dr. Mountain, Bishop of Quebec.

duplicated the experience of Asbury, who about this time was obliged, in consequence of illness, to give up his journeyings to what was then the far west, and wrote as follows: "The American Alps (Alleghany Mountains, just beyond which the preachers are now gone), the deep snows, the great rains, swimming the creeks and rivers, riding in the night, sleeping on the earthen floors, more or less of which I must experience if I go to the western country at this time, might cost me my life."

We have seen how Lossee, accompanied by Darius Dunham, returned from Conference of 1792 to work in Canada, the latter taking charge of the Cataraqui circuit, while the former proceeded to organise the work on the Oswegotchie field. Both seem to have laboured successfully, and each returned an increase of ninety members at the end of the year. Neither of these men attended the Conference of 1793, and for some unexplained reason no appointments to Canada appear in the Minutes. At this time the name of William Lossee disappears from the Minutes, and is never restored. The cause has a touch of pathos. When on the Cataraqui circuit Lossee formed the acquaintance of a young lady of admirable character and rare personal attractions, for whom he formed a strong attachment. How far the young lady may have returned his affection we have no means of knowing, but when Lossee left the neighbourhood to go to the Oswegotchie circuit he doubtless cherished bright hopes. In the meantime Dunham formed the acquaintance of the same lady, and he also was powerfully attracted. Suffice it to say, his suit proved successful, and the young lady subsequently became his wife. Tidings of what had

occurred came to Lossee with a shock that so far overset his mental balance as to render him entirely unfit for his work, and the Bishop quietly dropped him from the list of itinerants. When his mental health was somewhat restored, Lossee returned to the United States, engaged in business in New York, served as a local preacher, and after an interval of years revisited his friends in the Bay of Quinte country. It is probable he never married.

For a time the work in Canada was almost stationary, but in 1796 two young men were sent into the country, under whom it pleased God greatly to revive His work. And not in Canada only, for the sacred fire spread to various parts of the United States. Hezekiah Calvin Wooster was received on trial in 1793, and Daniel Coote in 1794. These two offered their services for Canada and were accepted, Wooster being stationed on the Oswegotchie and Coote on the Bay of Quinte (formerly Cataraqui) circuit, with Darius Dunham as presiding elder. Their journey to Canada was slow and tedious. Twenty-one nights were spent in the rude cabins of dwellers in the New York wilderness before they reached their destination. But once in Canada they entered upon their work in the spirit of men who had much to do and little time in which to do it, and it was not long before fruit appeared. Calvin Wooster, as he was commonly called, was a man of mighty faith and prayer. Often at houses where he lodged his voice would be heard in the night season pleading with God for the salvation of men. Wherever he went he preached holiness, and he lived it. Such was the fervency of his spirit and the pungency of his appeals that sinners would escape if possible from the house, or,

overwhelmed with conviction, would fall down and cry aloud for mercy. The other preachers caught the flame, and were swept along under its impulse.

The way in which divine power often manifested itself under Wooster's preaching was very remarkable. Once at a quarterly meeting on the Bay of Quinte circuit, just as Wooster began his sermon, a man in the front of the gallery began to swear profanely, and otherwise to disturb the congregation. The preacher appeared to take no notice until he was in the midst of his sermon, when suddenly fixing his eyes on the profane man, he pointed his finger at him, and stamping with his foot cried with great energy, "My God, smite him!" Instantly the man fell as if shot through the heart, and such a sense of God's presence and power came down upon the congregation that on every hand sinners cried for mercy, while the saints shouted for joy. On another occasion, as Nathan Bangs relates, "A stout opposer of the Methodists, hearing that his wife was in a prayer-meeting, rushed violently into the room, seized his wife and dragged her to the door, when, attempting to open it, he himself was seized with trembling, his knees failed him, he fell helpless upon the floor, and was fain to beg an interest in the prayers of those very people whom he had so much despised and persecuted. . . . This man afterwards became an itinerant minister." One more incident may be related. At a quarterly meeting, while Dunham was meeting the official brethren, Wooster remained in another meeting to pray with some who were awakened and others who were seeking full redemption. Suddenly a power from on high came upon the congregation. Many shouted the praises

of God, while others in silent awe lay prostrate on the floor. At this juncture Dunham came in and, seeing what was going on, kneeled down and began praying to God to stop the "raging of the wildfire." Meanwhile Wooster kneeled beside his troubled brother and softly whispered the prayer, "Lord, bless Brother Dunham! Lord, bless Brother Dunham!" The prayer of faith prevailed. Dunham fell prostrate on the floor, and ere he arose received a baptism of the very "fire" he had deprecated. A ministry so intense and burning as Wooster's could not be expected to continue long. After two years he returned to the United States, a victim of consumption, and died in holy triumph, at his father's residence, on 6th November 1798.

A different type of man in some respects, yet equally devoted, was Samuel Coote. Exceedingly handsome and graceful in person,—as was his wife,—affable and polite in manner, he attracted immediate attention wherever he went. In natural eloquence he far excelled any who went before him in that part of the country, and long years afterward it was doubted by those who had heard him if his equal was to be found among those who succeeded him. His oratory was smooth and flowing, and graceful like his person, and being entirely different from anything to which the primitive congregations in Canada had ever listened, it attracted people in large numbers and held them spell-bound while he talked. But far better than admiration and applause, his preaching led men to Christ, and hundreds were converted under his ministry. His methods in pastoral work were sometimes singular. He would ride up to a friend's house, alight from his horse, and take off

the saddle-bags. When the door was opened for him he would enter, but before shaking hands or speaking with anyone he would kneel down by a chair, spend a few moments in silent prayer, then arise and greet each member of the family with his accustomed affability and affection. There was one circumstance, however, which indicated that Coote was not altogether free from that vanity which sometimes finds a lodgment in the most ingenuous minds. Like Absalom, he had beautiful hair, and he wore it long, falling down over his shoulders and turning up in graceful curls. On retiring at night he would tie up his flowing locks, and in the morning comb them out and arrange them with scrupulous care. It must have seemed rather strange, at a period when the sharpest rebukes from the pulpit were often levelled at extravagance in dress or any form of personal ornament. But after all, one spot on the sun—and that a small one—is scarcely noticeable against the brightness of the whole disc.

In the closing year of the century Samuel Coote returned to the United States; but some time before his departure a circumstance occurred that is worth recording, as it throws some light on the attitude of the denominations toward each other in those early days, and the extent to which religious controversy sometimes prevailed. A Presbyterian minister in the Bay of Quinte country, named M'Dowell, was a rigid Calvinist, who carried his doctrines to their logical conclusions. When preaching at Adolphustown on one occasion, and enlarging upon his favourite theme of unconditional election, he offered to publicly argue the point with anyone who held a contrary belief. Coote

heard of the challenge, and, although modest in regard to his own scholastic attainments, resolved to accept it. The place appointed was a Presbyterian church in Ernestown, large for the times; but the congregation was larger still, and the discussion was held in the open air. The Presbyterian, mounting a waggon, occupied the first half of the day; then the Methodist preacher began, but after he had been speaking about two hours, the Presbyterians, headed by their minister, left the meeting, refusing to listen any longer; which might mean either that they felt their champion was defeated, or that their righteous indignation was stirred by the attacks of the other speaker on their favourite doctrine. Coote continued his discourse until the shadows began to fall, and it was generally allowed that he had the better of the argument. Be that as it may, the discussion resulted in some modification of Calvinistic preaching, and the "decrees" did not play so prominent a part in pulpit discourse as they had done aforetime.

In the same year that Coote returned to the United States Darius Dunham retired from the ranks of the itinerant ministry and "located," fixing his residence in the township of Fredericksburg, near the village of Napanee. During his twelve years in the ministry he had rendered much useful service to the infant church. He cared nothing for public opinion, and feared not the face of man. Utterly fearless in rebuking sin, and denunciatory in his style of preaching, he obtained the sobriquet of "scolding Dunham," which was not altogether undeserved. He was aware of the appellation given him, and would often begin a discourse by saying, "Well, scolding Dunham is come again, and probably some of you would not have come to

hear if you had known who was going to preach." Such a style might sometimes arouse, but it was not calculated to attract. In building up the Church he was more concerned about quality than numbers. On one occasion, when giving an opportunity to any who might desire to unite with the Church, a young woman who was present seemed very wishful, and said in an audible tone to another young woman who sat beside her, "Won't you join too?" "Oh," said the other, in an indifferent tone, "I don't care if I do." "Better wait until you *do* care," was Dunham's grim response; and wait she did. After Dunham located, he continued to serve God and the Church as a minister in that capacity to the close of his life.

The first regular missionary in Lower Canada was the eccentric but devoted Lorenzo Dow. Converted at the age of fifteen, he soon became exercised about preaching the gospel. Two years later he began to pray in public and sometimes to exhort. But his parents repressed what they considered his premature zeal. No man ever triumphed over so many obstacles. When eighteen years of age he attended some appointments with several circuit preachers, but they all discouraged his attempts. He tried again, but was told he had better go home. Three months were spent on a circuit on Rhode Island, and the Quarterly Board discharged him. At the Conference of 1797 he was proposed, rejected, and sent home. Yet, impelled by a strong sense of duty, he went about preaching from ten to fifteen times a week, and in eight months travelled over 8,000 miles, chiefly where there were no other preachers. At the Conference of 1798 he was again proposed; such, however, were the accounts of his strange

eccentricities, that the Conference, after a debate of three hours, declined to receive him, but left him in the hands of the presiding elder. These repeated rejections filled Lorenzo Dow with unspeakable grief, and he remarks, "I was afraid I should become insane." Still, he received an appointment, and went to work in his accustomed manner, preaching and visiting from house to house. But his eccentricities went with him, and he was called "crazy Dow." In the following year, 1799, he was sent to "Essex," but this simply meant that he was to go and form a circuit where none existed before. Dow fulfilled his commission, and formed a circuit which lay partly in Vermont and partly in the townships of Dunham and Sutton in Lower Canada. That his labours were successful may be inferred from the fact that at the next Conference the circuit was returned as having 274 members. But however devoted he may have been, and blameless in his personal religious character, Lorenzo could never be a good Methodist. That is to say, he never could work by rule and method, but must do good, if at all, in a fashion of his own. He was something like a comet with a very eccentric orbit, coming no one knew whence and going no one could tell whither. The next year, in obedience to one of his strange impulses, he took passage in a ship for Ireland, believing that the Lord had a work for him to do there.[1]

In 1795 the seat of the Provincial Government was transferred from Newark, at the mouth of the Niagara River, to a point on the north shore of Lake Ontario, about 40 miles from its western extremity. The land

[1] Playter's *History*.

was cleared and surveyed, government buildings, barracks, and a few private houses erected, and the place received the name of York, destined to become, in after-years, under the name of Toronto, the second commercial city in the Dominion of Canada. At the second session of the second Parliament an Act was passed the purport of which sounds strangely in these modern days. Hitherto matrimony could be solemnised only by the clergy of the Church of England, though civil marriages solemnised before a magistrate or other official were valid. But now the right was to be extended to ministers of the Church of Scotland, to Lutherans and Calvinists, whatever the latter phrase may mean. Methodist ministers were entirely excluded, and even in the case of others the privilege was hampered with conditions that in these days would be regarded as positively insulting. A Presbyterian minister, for example, must take with him seven respectable members of his congregation to testify his calling. He must produce proofs of his ordination, take the oath of allegiance, and pay five shillings to the clerk for a certificate of authority from the court. But before doing all this the minister must give notice of application at the previous session of the court, and pay one dollar, the notice to be read in the open court and posted in the clerk's office. These circumstances are referred to here because of their bearing upon the struggle in after-years for religious liberty.

Turning now from the region of the St. Lawrence and the Bay of Quinte, where Dunham and Coote had been succeeded by four new men,—Joseph Jewell, Sylvanus Keeler, William Anson, and James Herron,—we proceed to inquire how it fared with those who had crossed the

Niagara River and formed settlements in the wilderness of the Niagara peninsula. We have seen how the work of Methodism in that region began under the preaching of Major George Neal, but several years elapsed before a travelling preacher was secured. In 1795 Niagara appears on the list of circuits, with Darius Dunham in charge, and a membership of 65. As no travelling preacher had hitherto visited this region, we may infer that those who had been influenced by Neal's preaching had been enrolled as willing to unite with the Methodist Church on the arrival of a regular itinerant. It appears that Neal entered the travelling ranks in the United States after the close of the war, but soon retired on account of impaired health. His call to the ministry was peculiar. In those days dreams and "visions," so called, were not uncommon, and were treated with great deference. Neal dreamt that a glittering sword was given him, having two edges, and with the name of Wesley emblazoned thereon. He began preaching again soon after his arrival in Canada, and bore down so hard on the prevailing vices of the country that the exasperated rabble pelted him with stones on one occasion until the blood flowed down his face. Souls not a few were converted under his ministry, among others Christian Warner, who became leader of the first class in the Niagara country, and near whose farm the first church was built. "The Rev. George Ferguson, while yet a preaching soldier during the war of 1812, found many of Neal's converts in various places on the frontier, and still more of them when he came to travel the Niagara circuit in 1817."[1] The Rev. Robert Corson, who preached Neal's

[1] Carroll, *Case and his Contemporaries*, vol. i. p. 89.

funeral sermon, described him as follows to the Rev. Dr. Carroll: "Neal was possessed of a good English education. His preaching abilities were above mediocrity, very zealous, and rising sometimes to eloquence. He was tall and erect in person, retaining somewhat of his military bearing to the last. Religious truth from his lips sometimes was expressed in military phrase; he was wont to call the gospel a genuine Jerusalem blade, two-edged, cutting both ways."[1] Far on in life he became blind, but still quoted the Scriptures with correctness. He lived to the age of ninety-one, and died in peace.

Respecting the work in the Niagara country, for the first few years after the advent of the itinerants, the records are very scant. As we have seen, Darius Dunham was appointed to that field in 1795, and was succeeded the following year by James Coleman. In 1798 Michael Coote (brother of Samuel) is associated with Coleman, but in 1799 the latter is again alone on the field. This faithful itinerant calls for at least a passing remark. In his early years James Coleman grew up in ignorance and sin; about the close of the revolutionary war, however, Methodist itinerants reached the neighbourhood, and young Coleman "received the word with joy," but having no root in himself, when persecution arose because of the word he was offended, and fell away. After a severe illness he earnestly sought and obtained pardon, united with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and not long after received a licence to exhort, and subsequently a licence to preach. Being drafted to serve in the war against the Indians, he refused to comply, informing the captain that he would not serve.

[1] Carroll, *Case and his Contemporaries*, vol. i. p. 90.

"If you want to preach," said the captain, "you may go and preach in the army," and sent an officer with two or three men to seize him. When the *posse* arrived they found Coleman preaching, listened to the end, and then went away, troubling him no more. In 1791 he entered the itinerant ranks, and in 1794 was sent to Canada. On the route, in company with another volunteer and a young Canadian who was returning to the United States, they spent fifteen successive nights in the woods, building fires to scare away wild beasts. Before the journey was ended food supplies gave out, and they were reduced to one cracker each per day. Two years were spent in the Bay of Quinte country and on the St. Lawrence, after which he was sent to the Niagara circuit. Here he seems to have laboured for three years, and then returned to the United States, where he served in the itinerant work until 1824, when he became superannuated. He died in 1842. During his last year on the Niagara circuit his ministrations were made a great blessing to one who was destined to become one of the most noted personalities in American Methodism during the first half of the nineteenth century—the revered Nathan Bangs.

In the year 1800 the name of Joseph Sawyer appears in connexion with Niagara circuit. Joseph Jewell is presiding elder of the Canada district. There are six itinerants in all, and the membership of the church amounts to 936. In 1801 Niagara is divided, and the Long Point circuit is formed, with Joseph Sawyer and Seth Crowell as circuit preachers. The number of preachers in Canada is now 10, and the membership has increased to 1,159. About this time a train of providences raised up

a labourer in the Canadian field destined to fill a large space in the history of American Methodism, and of him we must give some account.

Nathan Bangs was born in New England, where he received as good a common school education as the country afforded at that time. Subsequently his father taught him the art of surveying. When he was about thirteen years of age, the family removed to the wilderness part of New York State, and located on the east branch of the Delaware River. To this remote settlement the Methodist itinerants made their way, and under their faithful preaching nearly all of the Bangs family were converted, and united with the Methodist Church. Four of the brothers ultimately became preachers; but at the time of which we speak, Nathan fought against conviction and levelled his shafts of sarcasm at the humble itinerants. When twenty years of age, impelled by the restless pioneer spirit, he set out for the wilds of Canada, in company with a devoted sister and her husband. Their way lay through dense forests, and the only mode of conveyance for the lady and their few effects was an ox-sled. With such a vehicle progress must have been painfully slow. Passing over the ground where the city of Buffalo now stands, where they found only two or three log huts, they crossed the Niagara at Fort Erie, and followed the course of the river downward to the neighbourhood of its mighty cataract. Nathan Bangs had journeyed far from home, but was unable to get away from himself or the stings of an accusing conscience. His most serious impressions were deepened by his very surroundings. "The mournful thoughts," he writes, "which passed through my mind while wandering

alone in the forests of this strange country I cannot well express. Sometimes I would seat myself in the solitary woods and bewail my condition till my heaving heart found relief in floods of tears. The best satisfaction I could find was in being alone, reading, praying, and meditating. On one thing I resolved: being now separated from my former associates, I determined not to entangle myself again in the vain pleasures of the world."

It had been young Bangs' intention to support himself as a land surveyor, but not finding employment in that work he took a school in what was afterwards known as the Warner neighbourhood. His success as a teacher and his general demeanour won the respect of the people; but having accumulated some funds he was in danger of relapsing into religious indifference. Still his mind remained susceptible to serious impressions and slight occurrences were sufficient to recall them. For months he was passing through a series of mental struggles that racked his tender conscience, but he found not the way of peace. His inveterate prejudice would not allow him to hear the few Methodists with whom he occasionally came in contact; indeed, he shunned them as dangerous fanatics. A certain clergyman, so called, came into the neighbourhood, but being a card-player and a drunkard he had no medicine for a soul distressed. A Calvinistic preacher came, and young Bangs talked much with him, seeking relief in the dogmas of election and final perseverance. A devoted Methodist crossed his path, and the troubled youth must needs assail his views; the Arminian, however, spoke of personal religion, and "his words," says Bangs, "came like a dagger to my heart, and I could make no reply, but turned from

him, begging him to pray for me." But as yet he could not receive the Methodist doctrine. "I supposed," he writes, "that a people about whom so much evil was said must be under a fatal delusion. Thus I went stumbling over the truth and warring against my conscience."

About this time James Coleman, a Methodist itinerant, reached the neighbourhood, and lodged with the family where Bangs made his home. Coleman's abilities were not great, but he was singularly devoted, and the unction that attended his prayers was most unusual. His conversation, preaching, and prayers produced a deep impression upon the mind of Nathan Bangs, but he did not open his mind to the sympathetic itinerant, and his distress continued. But a day or two later, while walking in the forest and meditating over what Coleman had said, he was constrained to kneel in prayer, and then resumed his walk, looking for light and comfort. Suddenly, like John Wesley, he "felt his heart strangely warmed." "What is this?" was his instinctive thought; and the answer seemed to be, "It is the love of God." His new-found peace and joy continued for several days; but failing to confess Christ before men, doubt and darkness returned. Hearing that two Methodist preachers had arrived, and that a love-feast was to be held at the house of Christian Warner, he went with gladness, resolved to receive the truth from whatever source it might come. The itinerants were Joseph Sawyer and Joseph Jewell, men of power in their day. Sawyer was the preacher; his theme was the Beatitudes, and as he discoursed on "Blessed are they that mourn," etc., "he unfolded," says Bangs, "all the enigmas of my heart more fully than I could myself." Further conversation with the

itinerant was very helpful. From this time forward he took a decided stand, and daily opened his school with prayer. This raised a storm of opposition, and some even threatened personal violence. The result was, he collected what was owing to him and left the school.

"I had now," he remarked, "taken a stand from which I could not well recede. I felt much inward peace, and the Holy Scriptures were indescribably precious to me." Having joined the Methodist society, it never occurred to him to do other than conform to the rules. He had formerly dressed in the fashion of the times, with ruffled shirts and long hair tied in a queue; but now the ruffles were discarded, and the long hair shared the same fate. "When I became acquainted with the general rules," he remarks, "I was struck with their scriptural character, and could not but remark the truth of Wesley's saying, 'All these we know the Spirit of God writes on truly awakened hearts.' Before I knew these rules as in the Methodist discipline, the Holy Spirit had written most of them on my heart." It was not long after this that he entered into the rest of faith. The Holy Spirit revealed to him at once his own utter sinfulness, the righteousness of the divine law, and the method whereby Christ had "fulfilled the law and made it honourable." "At the same time," he tells us, "I felt a gracious power to rely upon His atoning merits by simple faith. Instantly I felt that my sins were cancelled for Christ's sake, and the Spirit of God bore witness with mine that I was adopted into the family of His people." Having received this grace, he must needs turn it to account. "I went from house to house," he says, "declaring what God had done for my soul, exhorting

the people to seek His mercy, and praying with those who would permit me. Some mocked, some wept, and some received the word with joy."

Having obtained another school in a Methodist neighbourhood, young Bangs set himself to a careful reading of the works of Wesley and Fletcher, meanwhile exercising his gifts in a somewhat private way. A constitutional timidity was a great hindrance to public effort. When leading in prayer he "trembled like a leaf," and an attempt to lead a class "was an entire failure." About this time he became an inmate of the home of Christian Warner, a devoted Christian and useful class-leader, through whose teaching and example, joined to the reading of Wesley's works, he was led to a clear apprehension of the believer's privilege to be sanctified wholly, and became an earnest seeker of this grace also. To one so thoroughly in earnest, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the result could not be doubtful. Shortly after, when uniting in prayer with a few Christian friends, the grace of supplication was vouchsafed in unusual measure. "My supplications," he writes, "were importunate, so that I know not how long I continued to pray. When I ceased I sank down into an inexpressible calmness, as lying passive at the feet of God. I felt relieved and comforted, as though I had been cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. . . . All my inward distress was gone. I could look up with a child-like composure and trust, and behold God as my heavenly Father. . . . I certainly was filled at that time with the 'perfect love which casteth out fear,' for I had no fear of death or judgment. . . . Such a sense of God's ineffable goodness pervaded my soul that I seemed to sink, con-

founded by His love, into very nothingness before Him. I felt that I was the least of all saints, but had an evidence bright as the noonday sun that all my sins were taken away, and without fear I could depart and be with Christ at any moment He should see fit to call me. I here simply relate the facts as they occurred. The change in my nature was as evident to me as had been my justification. Whatever name others may attach to this gracious experience, I believe I was then sanctified by the Spirit of God mercifully given unto me."

We have dwelt somewhat fully on the spiritual struggles of Nathan Bangs, not only because the record is intensely interesting in itself, but because it indicates the prominence given in those pioneer days to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification, and explains the secret of the spiritual power wielded by men like Bangs and Wooster, and their phenomenal success in winning souls. They realised the truth of what Wesley wrote in 1776: "When Christian perfection is not strongly and explicitly preached, there is seldom any remarkable blessing from God; and, consequently, little addition to the society, and little life in the members of it. . . . Till you press the believers to expect full salvation *now*, you must not look for any revival." The words are as true to-day as when first they were uttered, and it is because ministers and people give so little heed to them that a paralysis of worldliness and formality has fallen upon the Church. Only let the old testimony be revived, and the old power will return.

With such an experience it is not surprising that a strong conviction came to the mind of Nathan Bangs that he must preach the gospel; but his deep sense of in-

sufficiency for so great a work held him back, and he did not open his mind to anyone. He prayed much, however, and "one day," he writes, "as I was walking the road in deep meditation upon this subject, a sudden ray of divine illumination struck my mind like a flash of lightning, accompanied with the words, 'I have anointed thee to preach the gospel.' I sank to the ground and cried out, 'Here am I.'" The work was done, the struggle ended. From this time forward Nathan Bangs never wavered or looked backward. To say that he had no temptations, or even times of depression from the sense of his insufficiency, would be equivalent to saying that he was not human; but none of these things moved him, and throughout a ministry extending over half a century he could say, "One thing I do."

Joseph Sawyer, like most of the preachers of his time, was a quick and accurate reader of human character, and he discovered in Nathan Bangs the qualities requisite for a successful preacher of the gospel. The itinerancy at that period was under an almost military discipline, which explains in part its phenomenal success. Instead of being trained *for* the ministry they were trained *in* it, as became members of the *legio tonans*, or thundering legion.[1] When the call came for men for the firing-line, there was little disposition to confer with flesh and blood, and indeed there was not time for it. The call was too urgent, and the King's business required haste. Strongly pressed by Sawyer to preach the gospel, the young convert yielded

[1] In Christian tradition this name was given to a legion of Christians in the army of Marcus Aurelius, in battle with the Quadi, whose prayers for rain were answered by a thunder shower, which refreshed the thirsty Romans, while it destroyed numbers of the enemy by lightning.

so far as to consent to take an appointment fifteen miles away. On Sunday morning he was on the ground, earnestly praying for divine aid; but, like many another new recruit on the eve of battle, he was full of fears, and wished he had not undertaken the task. But when the time came, "I had no sooner opened my mouth," he writes, "than the Lord filled it with words and arguments; the Scriptures seemed like a fruitful field before me. The word of God was like fire in my bones, and its utterance was attended 'with the Holy Ghost and with power.'" Soon after he made a second venture in the neighbourhood where his sister resided, but was unable to fix his mind on a suitable text, and abandoned the thought of preaching, purposing to exhort instead. When the moment came, he opened his Bible, read the first words he saw, which happened to be Luke xx. 14: "But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." Then for three quarters of an hour he spoke with such readiness and power that the people appeared as if thunder-struck, and the effect was remarkable.

Another forward step was now taken. Sawyer took the promising neophyte with him "around the circuit," telling him, "You must exhort after I preach," a common practice in those days. "When I rose to follow him," writes Bangs, "I shook in every limb, my lips stiffened, and I could hardly speak; but soon they were loosed, and the power of the Spirit descended on the assembly in such a manner that some sobbed aloud, some praised God audibly, and others fell to the floor as if shot dead." No

wonder the young exhorter "felt unusually comforted and encouraged." More than that, however, he felt elated. The adversary was not slow in perceiving the "joint in the harness," and suggested, "See what you have done: you have excelled even the preacher." Bangs strove hard to repel the temptation, but it followed him all that day and the next. At the next appointment he was taught a needed lesson. "When I rose to exhort," he says, "my mind was barren: I could only stammer out a few words, and at last sat down, utterly confounded and mortified." Other varying experiences he had, sometimes speaking with liberty and sometimes with none. But he had learned his lesson. His sufficiency was of God. Henceforth his trust would be alone in the Almighty arm. He was now fully committed to the calling and work of an itinerant, wherein we must follow him a little further, as it belongs to the story of pioneer days.

Methodism in America at this period might be justly termed the Church militant, and its itinerants were leaders of what must have seemed, from the human standpoint, a forlorn hope. And yet in its victorious march it carried many thousands captive, and on its famous battlefields "the slain of the Lord were many." This was due, in large measure, to the singular devotion of the preachers. Asbury's rule was absolute, and might appear arbitrary; but he never sent his preachers on a campaign where he was unwilling to lead the way, or expose them to toil and suffering that he did not fully share. His example was itself an inspiration. The preachers caught his spirit and went courageously wherever he sent them, esteeming the post of danger and hardship the post of honour. And

among these devoted men no one rendered a more ready obedience or more heroic service than did Nathan Bangs. His first circuit as a travelling preacher was Niagara. "It extended," he tells us, "from the head of Lake Ontario over the Grand River, and comprehended all that part of the country known as Long Point, which juts into Lake Erie." But this is a very inadequate description. The fact is, the circuit included the whole of the Niagara peninsula, wherever there were settlements, from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, and from the Niagara River westward to the township of Oxford, and required a tour of six weeks, and preaching almost daily, to complete a single round. Roughly stated, the circuit embraced a territory about 30 by 80 miles in extent, or approximately 2,400 square miles. "The settlements in this country," Bangs writes, "were new, the roads bad, and the fare very hard; but God was with us in much mercy, awakening and converting sinners, and this was abundant compensation for all our toils." When filling some appointments in the township of Burford, word reached him of another settlement, twenty-five miles farther west, where they were anxious for the gospel, and he set out to visit them. "It being the beginning of winter," he remarked, "the ground partly frozen, the mud deep, and the road, if such it could be called, running through a wilderness, though I made all the speed I could I travelled only about fourteen miles that day. I put up at a small log hut with a family that had been educated as Baptists. I was treated with hospitality, but they seemed to have little sense of religion." The next day's experience was more encouraging. Reaching the settlement for which he was bound, he lodged with

a Major Ingersoll, to whom he had a letter of introduction. "I was received," he says, "with cordiality and treated with respect. I preached here three times, and under the last two sermons many were awakened to a sense of their lost condition, and afterwards converted."

Shortly before receiving this encouragement the young evangelist had been so sorely discouraged that he resolved to return home. On reaching the Grand River a thaw had broken up the ice, and it was impossible to cross, and he was compelled to retrace his steps. Dreams were not lightly esteemed in those days, and Bangs had a dream which was, to say the least, remarkable. He thought he was working with a pickaxe on the top of a rock for hours without making any impression. Quite discouraged, he said to himself at last, "It is useless; I will pick no more." Suddenly a stranger of dignified aspect stood beside him. "You will pick no more?" asked the stranger. "No," said the dreamer. "Were you not set to the task?" "Yes." "And why abandon it?" "My work is vain; I make no impression on the rock." Solemnly the stranger answered, "What is that to you? Your duty is to pick whether the rock yields or not. The work is in your own hands, the result is not. Work on." Resuming his task, the sleeper struck a mighty blow, and the rock flew into a thousand pieces. A glorious revival that came soon after was regarded as the fulfilment of his dream. And why not? If it please God to instruct and encourage His children "in thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men," what do we gain by doubting it? Visions and dreams, whereby God "sealeth instruction," were common in a simpler age than ours;

but in the gross materialism of later times it would seem as though the vision had departed, and that our dreams seldom rise above the dignity of a nightmare.

Many pages might be filled with spiritual experiences of varying character; my object, however, is not to write a spiritual biography, but to present a picture of social and religious conditions in those pioneer days; and incidents in the career of Nathan Bangs are so typical of the period that I use them freely. The following brief quotation aptly describes the circumstances of many of the early itinerants: "One cold day, while riding through the woods, I was deeply disturbed with the thoughts of my loneliness and destitution; for my pecuniary means were about exhausted. My salary was next to nothing. I could see no means for my future wants; I lived from house to house, from settlement to settlement, and the future seemed dreary and forlorn. Here was another temptation by which my mind was greatly perplexed, when taking out my hymn-book from my pocket my eyes fell upon these words:

> Peace, troubled soul, thou need'st not fear,
> Thy great Provider still is near;
> Who fed thee last will feed thee still;
> Be calm, and sink into His will.

As I read them such a sudden glow of joy filled and overflowed my soul that I praised God aloud, and I rode on triumphing in His goodness to me and to all men."

The faithful preaching of the gospel, while it brought many to Christ, stirred the hatred of opposers in no ordinary degree. The following incidents were related many years afterwards by one who had personal know-

ledge of the facts. Bangs was the first minister of any denomination to visit the settlement of Colchester. A man named W., though not a Christian, opened his house for preaching. Bangs was unsparing in his denunciations of sin of every kind, especially such as was common among the people. Some of W.'s godless companions resolved to put a stop to this, and it was finally decided that they would meet at the next preaching-service, when W., who was privy to the scheme, should turn the preacher out of his house and forbid him to return. Somehow the scheme got noised abroad, a crowd assembled, and the nefarious plan was carried out to the letter. Whereupon the preacher literally "shook the dust off his feet" as a testimony against them for refusing the message of salvation. He then departed amid the jeers of the crowd. Now for the sequel. From that time peace and prosperity began to forsake W.'s home. He became a wreck, morally, mentally, socially. His wife was seduced from her home, and never returned. In a few years all his property was lost or squandered, and he became dependent on charity for his daily bread. Years afterward this same W., now old and decrepit, sickened and died. The Rev. Horace Dean, then stationed in that region, called on the wretched man, to impart, if possible, counsel and consolation; but no impression could be produced on his heart, and he died in a state of stolid indifference.

The work of Bangs in the Niagara peninsula was now ended, and he prepared to depart for another field, in company with Joseph Jewell. Their destination was the Bay of Quinte country, but a series of unforeseen circumstances induced Bangs to tarry for a time at Little

York (now Toronto). On Yonge Street there were settlements extending northward from Little York for a distance of thirty miles, and among these Bangs exercised his ministry. "The settlements in this part of the country," he writes, "were all new, the roads extremely bad, and the people generally poor and demoralised. Our occasional preachers were exposed to many privations, and often to much suffering from poor fare and violent opposition." Dr. Abel Stevens, the talented historian of American Methodism, to whose *Life and Times of Nathan Bangs, D.D.*, I am indebted for many of these incidents, presents a graphic picture of the conditions prevailing in those pioneer days. Commenting on an observation of Bangs concerning the people, that "all showed openly what they were by their words and actions, and either accepted religion heartily or opposed it violently," Dr. Stevens observes, "Such is the character of frontier communities. Moral restraints are feeble among them, conventional restraints are few; the freedom of their simple wilderness life characterises all their actions; they have their own code of decorum, and sometimes of law itself. They are frank, hospitable, fond of excitement and of hearty if not reckless amusements. The primitive Methodist preachers knew well how to accommodate themselves to the habits and also to the fare of such a people; hence their extraordinary success along the whole American frontier. Their simple and familiar methods of worship, in cabins and barns or under trees, suited the rude settlers. Their meetings were without the stiff order and ceremonious formality of older communities. They were often scenes of free debate, of interpellations and interlocutions

—a hearer at the door-post or the window responding to, questioning, or defying the preacher, who 'held forth' from a chair, a bench, or a barrel, at the other end of the building. This popular freedom was not without its advantages. It authorised equal freedom on the part of the preacher; it allowed great plainness of speech and directness of appeal. The early memoranda before me afford not a few glimpses of this primitive life of the frontier: crowded congregations in log huts or barns—some of the hearers seated, some standing, some filling the unglazed casements, some thronging the overhanging trees; startling interjections thrown into the sermon by eccentric listeners; violent polemics between the preacher and headstrong sectarists, the whole assembly sometimes involved in the earnest debate, some for, some against him, and ending in general confusion. A lively Methodist hymn was generally the best means of restoring order in such cases."

Bangs continued to labour on the Yonge Street field till the close of the Conference year, and was then appointed to the Bay of Quinte circuit with Joseph Sawyer and Peter Vannest. After the toils and privations of the two preceding years, this must have been a delightful change. "Here," he writes, "I found myself agreeably situated among a people deeply experienced in religion, remarkably kind, and attentive to all my wants; and, in addition to all my other comforts, I had the satisfaction of being under the oversight of my spiritual father, Joseph Sawyer, whom I loved and venerated as one of the best of men." Of other noted workers in those pioneer days we get occasional glimpses: Hezekiah Calvin Wooster, full of

faith and of the Holy Ghost, preaching the doctrine and exemplifying the experience of full salvation; Lorenzo Dow, eccentric to the verge of insanity, permeated with a droll, quaint humour, yet ever hungering and thirsting after God; Darius Dunham, an arousing preacher, sharp in rebuke and fearing not the face of clay, mightily baptized in one of Wooster's prayer-meetings, and afterwards spreading the holy fire wherever he went; Elijah Woolsey, a man of sweet spirit and greatly blessed in his labours,—these were some of the men who preached Christ wherever they went in demonstration of the Spirit and with power, until it became a tradition in the settlements, from the Canadian frontier to the seat of Conference (commonly New York), that the northern preachers had brought the Canada fire with them. This was none other than the fire of holiness, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century spread like a prairie fire over the circuits in Canada.

In the autumn of this year an epidemic of typhus fever swept the settlements of the Bay of Quinte country, and Nathan Bangs was stricken. For six weeks he hovered between life and death, and on three occasions friends were called in to see him die. Ultimately, through the goodness of God, he was raised up again; but he carried the effects of that terrible sickness with him to the close of his life. In other respects the year was a glorious success. More than a hundred members had been added to the societies, and the large circuit had peace in all its borders. One can scarcely repress a smile to hear Bangs relate with evident satisfaction the full payment of his "quarterage" at the end of

the year, which meant the munificent sum of eighty dollars for the entire year. And this suggests some remarks about the sufferings of the itinerants of those days, in consequence of deficits in such payments, and the loss to the Church by the unavoidable "location" of many and the premature death of many more, caused by their excessive labours and wretchedly deficient support. This was felt in England as well as America in the early days. One historian of Methodism has affirmed that of two hundred and eighteen whom he denominates the "first race of Methodist preachers" in England, more than half retired from the itinerancy, nearly all of them for these reasons. In America the effect was still more marked. Of six hundred and fifty whose names had appeared in the Minutes, about five hundred died "located," and nearly half of those who fell in the ranks died before they were thirty years of age, and about two thirds after twelve years of service. And what marvel? Not only were their labours excessive and their support of the scantiest; but, as Dr. Abel Stevens remarks, they suffered from "the exposures incident to a new country and the severities of a variable climate, wilting under the heats of the south or the wintry storms of the north, swimming streams, braving snows, sleeping but partially sheltered in frontier cabins or under the trees of the forest." These were the common, everyday experiences of the pioneer preachers in the United States and Canada a hundred years ago. And it is equally true, though not so well understood, that "pioneer days" in the Dominion of Canada are not entirely a thing of the past. At this very day, on the coast of Labrador and even Newfoundland, on the frontiers of "New Ontario," on lonely

prairies of the great North-West, on isolated Indian stations of the farther North, and in the mining-camps of British Columbia, Methodist itinerants are rendering just as heroic service as did their fathers; and although receiving rather better support, are nevertheless familiar with the exposures, the hardships, and privations which were the common lot of the Methodist preachers at the beginning of the last century.

Though Bangs had been greatly weakened by chills and fever while in the Long Point country, aggravated by his serious illness on the Bay of Quinte circuit, he did not go to the Conference to ask for an easier field until he might recruit his strength; on the contrary, he made request to be sent to what was then the extreme west of Upper Canada, lying between the Long Point circuit, which he had formerly organised, and the Detroit River. Asbury's eye kindled as he surveyed the wasted form of the young itinerant, and recognising in him a man after his own heart, answered with his usual prompt decision, "You shall go, my son." A bit of history lies back of this. During the first year of his itinerancy in the Niagara country Bangs received a letter from a Baptist of German descent, named Messmore, who lived on the river Thames, about sixty miles east of Detroit, urging him to come and preach the gospel in that spiritually destitute region. To the ardent itinerant it seemed like a Macedonian call that must be obeyed, and he repeatedly offered his services for the new field; but his presiding elder refused to send him, deeming his health too feeble and the needs of other fields too urgent to permit of this new venture, and he was sent to Bay of Quinte. During his severe illness the vision of

the destitute western field was often before him, and believing that his end was near he bequeathed his horse and watch, all he possessed, to any preacher who would respond to the call. Now that he had obtained the desire of his heart, hindrances seemed to multiply. He was greatly troubled with thoughts of his youth, want of health, lack of money (he had but $15), the distance (about six hundred miles), and many other things. But, nothing daunted, he set out with two others, traversed the wilderness of New York, entered Canada by way of Kingston, then up the north shore of Lake Ontario, preaching at the settlements on the way, till he reached his old ground on the Niagara circuit. By this time "my money," he writes, "was all expended, and I had about eighty miles still to travel . . . and I knew not how I could advance any farther." What could he do? Just what many another had to do in similar straits: "I went into the woods, kneeled down before God, and wept and prayed. Finally the words came forcibly to mind, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' I arose with renewed courage, saying, 'I will go in the name of the Lord, for He has the hearts of all men, and He can turn them which way soever He will.' Before I left these parts one friend and another put into my hands money amounting to eleven dollars, enough for my journey."

Spending a day or two with his sister and her family, Bangs resumed his journey, accompanied by a young man who had volunteered for the trip. In Oxford township he spent a day or two among those who had been the first-fruits of his ministry. Departing thence, they journeyed thirty miles to Delaware township, "where,"

he remarks, "I preached and lodged in the last house in the settlement. My bed was a bundle of straw, and my supper mush and milk." Next morning at daybreak the travellers started for a ride through a wilderness forty-five miles in extent, with no road, only a blazed trail, often at a loss to know whether they were going right or wrong. For themselves the only refreshment was a little Indian bread and dried beef, and for the horses what they could nibble up as they passed along. "We arrived," says Bangs, "about sunset, weary, hungry, and thirsty, at a small log hut, inhabited by a Frenchman. . . . I asked the woman of the cabin if she could give me a drink of tea, but she had none. Being almost famished, I requested the man to procure us some water, which we sipped, a little at a time, as if it were nectar; we then ate some Indian pudding and milk, the best food we could obtain. After praying with the family"—a practice those early itinerants never omitted—"we lay down on a bundle of straw, slept sweetly, and rose in the morning much refreshed and invigorated in body and mind. The poor woman was so kind as to send early to a distant neighbour to beg some tea for us, but she had neither tea-kettle, teapot, nor teacup; she therefore boiled it in a dish-kettle, and then poured it into a tin cup, from which we drank it with more relish than ever a king drank wine from a golden goblet."

Spending an hour or two with the Moravian missionaries on an Indian reserve on the river Thames, the travellers pushed on to the house of the first white settler, which they reached early in the afternoon. The

interview illustrates the direct methods of these pioneer preachers. A man stood before the door, and after the customary salutations Bangs inquired, "Do you want the gospel preached here?" After looking at him with curious earnestness, the man replied, "Yes, that we do: do you preach the gospel?" "Yes," said Bangs. "Well, then, get down and come in." But something else must first be done before the mind of the evangelist could be at rest. "I have ridden a great distance," he said, "to preach in this region. It is now Saturday afternoon; to-morrow being the Sabbath, I must have a place to preach in before I alight from my horse." Deliberating a few moments, the man said, "I have a house for you to preach in, victuals and lodging for yourself, and provender for your horse, and you shall be welcome to them all if you will come in." With such a reception no wonder the itinerant breaks out, "God has made my way plain thus far, and therefore I will praise Him." Next day the house was crowded, and with great freedom he proclaimed the message, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." "I believe," he says, "I preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." At the close of the service a stranger introduced himself. He was from New Jersey, had been a member of the Methodist Church there, and often entertained the preachers, among others Bishop Asbury. For seven years he had lived in the Canadian wilderness, totally destitute of religious ordinances, there being no minister in all that region. Ascertaining that he lived ten miles farther down the

river, a messenger was dispatched to inform the scattered settlers that there would be preaching in that neighbourhood at three o'clock the same afternoon. "When I arrived," says Bangs, "the house and yard were full of people, to whom I preached with lively satisfaction." In the congregation was a venerable-looking man with a long beard, who was subsequently introduced as Mr. Messmore, the same person who two years before had written so earnestly to Mr. Bangs to "come over and help them." The next day the preacher was at Messmore's house, twenty-one miles distant. Another ten miles next day, and he preaches in the house of an Indian woman, the widow of a French-Canadian, who had left her in comfortable circumstances for that period. She proved a veritable Shunammite, for she prepared for the weary itinerant in an upper room, "a bed, a table, a chair, and a candlestick, and no one was allowed to enter that room in his absence except to keep it in order."

The western extremity of this new field was reached at Detroit. On the first occasion the people turned out well, though most of them were French Roman Catholics; but on the Sabbath only a few children appeared, and the disappointed evangelist "shook the dust off his feet as a testimony against them," and departed. About four weeks later the whole town was destroyed by fire. Bangs proceeded down the river to Fort Malden, then eastward along the shore of Lake Erie, preaching in "settlements of American, English, Scotch, Irish, and Dutch emigrants," and thus completed a circuit which he travelled for about three months. The moral and spiritual destitution of the

whole region was extreme, and yet, adds the preacher, "they seemed ripe for the gospel, and received and treated God's messenger with great attention and kindness." Besides the moral destitution, that country had another drawback. Much of it was a land of marshes, swamps, and stagnant pools, where rotting vegetation made the water very unwholesome, inducing fever and ague of the most virulent type. Bangs himself was stricken, but the attack was light; he was kindly nursed, and was soon at his work again. Everywhere the settlers were despondent, and many were leaving the country in hope of finding new homes in a healthier region. In one instance a party of Scotchmen and their families were met in haste to get away, no less than twenty-one of their original number having died within a few days. Strange to say, many of the men were uproariously drunk. Faithful admonition produced such an effect that they asked him to preach and pray with them, and next day they parted from him with their hearty blessings.

Winter was now approaching, and he saw the impossibility of travelling such a region in the ensuing months. Finally, he determined to go to the Niagara circuit and return in the spring. About the middle of November he set out, and in due time reached the last house in the settlement—a log hut—beyond which lay forty miles of unbroken forest. Here he was joined by another solitary traveller, and in the early morning they set out. The snow was several inches deep, the streams high and still open and the mud deep. Night overtook the wayfarers on the bank of a stream, and as it was impossible to proceed after dark there was no

alternative but to camp where they were. Fortunately they had carried with them some food for themselves and their horses, and they succeeded after much difficulty in kindling a fire, without which they must have perished. "We tied our horses to the trees," is the record, "gave them some oats, ate some food ourselves, went to the creek and drank, and then, having prayed, lay down to sleep in our booth"—constructed of branches—"the stars shining brightly above us, and the winds moaning through the solemn trees. . . . At the break of day we mounted our horses and went onward. We arrived at the first house about three o'clock in the afternoon, hungry, thirsty, and exhausted. . . . After supper I prayed with the family and went to bed, truly thankful that the Lord had preserved my life and health through all these fatigues and dangers." Reaching his old Niagara circuit, Bangs laboured for the rest of the year in association with David Pickett, and their labours were greatly blessed. At one appointment, which he describes as a "very hardened place," an extensive revival occurred and a vigorous society was organised. Among the converts was a young lady whom Bangs subsequently married —the sharer of his toils and successes to the end of his life.

It is unnecessary to follow any further the labours and experiences of this typical Methodist preacher of the olden time. Enough has been said to show the conditions of society in the wilderness of Canada a hundred years ago, and what manner of men they were who laid the foundations of what has since become the largest Protestant Church in the Canadian Dominion. As we

survey the hardships, labours, and triumphs of these indomitable itinerants—men "of whom the world was not worthy"—we can but say, that "there were giants in the earth in those days." Perhaps the very circumstances of the time gave them a prominence that they might not otherwise have gained. They were few in number, and for the most part lived and laboured alone, and there were no others with whom to compare them. They came and went "like angels' visits, few and far between," and the message they brought to lonely dwellings, their personal devotion and rude but impassioned eloquence, invested them with a dignity and importance in the eyes of the scattered dwellers in the wilderness that might not be accorded to them to-day. But let not this detract from the love and reverence which are their due. They were men called and qualified by the Holy Spirit for a special work, and with rare devotion their work was done. To these men sin and salvation, death and judgment, were tremendous realities, and they lived and laboured as in the immediate presence of God. To some of them life was one long martyrdom. "In journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labours and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,"—these were things which made up much of their daily experience. Now "they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Peace to their ashes. Their record is on high.

A TYPICAL CAMP-MEETING.

One cannot well close this imperfectly told story of pioneer days in the Canadas without reference to a characteristic feature of a somewhat later time, namely, the camp-meeting. Many persons have been under the impression that camp-meetings originated with the Methodists, but this is a mistake; they originated with the Presbyterians in the Western States of America, where religious conditions justified extraordinary methods. The Methodist itinerants were not slow to perceive the value of such an agency, and being unhampered by conventional rules of order and decorum, such as prevail in long-established communities, they quickly adopted the camp-meeting as a means of deepening religious interest and reaching a class of persons who could not be reached except by some unusual method. At the time of which we speak, population was sparse and settlements were few and far between. There were no "centres of population" where the people might gather for social intercourse; in fact, about the only thing that broke the monotony of their daily existence was the flying visits of the Methodist itinerant, who came and preached in wayside cabin or log schoolhouse, and then hurried on to his next appointment. Among a people so circumstanced the announcement that a camp-meeting, to last for a week, would be held at a certain time and place, created quite a flutter of excitement. Preparations would at once begin, and as the time drew near the event was looked forward to with eager anticipation. To some it came as a welcome respite from the toil and sordid cares of their daily life; to others it

afforded an opportunity for social intercourse which human nature so strongly craves; while others were attracted solely by the novelty of the occasion and its unknown possibilities of adventure, excitement, or amusement. But there were others who were moved by deeper feelings—godly men and women who found it not easy, in the absence of Christian intercourse and the means of grace, to maintain a steady soul-growth and a daily fellowship with God. These looked forward to the camp-meeting as an opportunity for spiritual quickening that was sorely needed, and also a time when unconverted children and neighbours might be brought into the fold of God.

A spot was usually selected in the wooded portion of the farm of a staunch Methodist, and in a Methodist neighbourhood, near to a good supply of pure water. If a piece of ground could be discovered sloping gently in one direction, so much the better. Some days in advance of the camp-meeting a group of sturdy axe-men would put in an appearance, and proceed, under the direction of a senior itinerant, to prepare the ground. The smaller trees and underbrush are carefully removed, and afterward utilised in building a brush fence or stockade around the camp-ground, leaving an opening at one side only, usually in the direction of the nearest highway. Inequalities in the surface of the ground are levelled as much as possible, and all roots and rubbish cleared away. Then a "preaching-stand" is erected at the foot of the slope, constructed—both walls and roof—of rough deal boards, and divided into two parts, the front part having a long seat for the preachers and a sloping desk for Bible and hymn-book, the rear part a small room where the preacher who is to

officiate can retire for meditation and prayer, unless he prefers a dim forest aisle, which is sometimes the case. Large trees are cut down and the stems dragged to the spot to serve as supports for seats. If it be a neighbourhood where lumber is easily obtainable, perhaps a tabernacle of good size is erected, in which services may be held in case of rain. In front of the preachers' stand a long pole is stretched on short supports—a convenient place for penitents to kneel at when the battle is fairly begun and "the slain of the Lord are many." Several waggon-loads of straw are brought from neighbouring farms and strewed liberally over the ground, contributing to cleanliness and affording protection from damp. Lastly, several light-stands are erected at convenient points. These are constructed of four upright poles, with cross pieces at the top, on which other poles are laid side by side, making a foundation on which earth is piled to the depth of a foot or more. On this is placed a quantity of fuel—pine roots if possible, as these burn freely and give excellent light.

Preparations, so far as the ground is concerned, may now be regarded as complete. Families in the neighbourhood, and some from adjacent neighbourhoods, have already prepared their rough board or cotton tents, and are in a position to extend hospitality to wayfarers from distant places until these also have their temporary shelters in order. Among the earlier arrivals are the itinerants from various fields, who have come praying for and expecting glorious displays of saving power. On the first day of the meeting the tide fairly sets in, and the people begin to arrive in considerable numbers, some of

them from a distance of thirty, fifty, or even a hundred miles. They come in waggons, on horseback, on foot, some in the earlier days even on ox-sleds, bringing such store of provisions, bedding, and cooking utensils as might suffice for their simple wants during the ensuing week. As they meet on the outskirts of the camp-ground tongues are loosed. There are hearty greetings between friends who have not met for years, kind inquiries after children and neighbours, and hopes expressed for a "good time" during the meeting. Then the bustle of preparation goes on, erecting temporary shelters and stowing away food and other supplies.

The noonday meal is quickly dispatched, and not long after a rousing blast from the preachers' stand on a tin horn in the hands of a stalwart itinerant goes echoing through the forest glades, notifying the people that the time has come for the first service to begin. They assemble quickly, for this is a summons that must not be neglected, and the service opens with a stirring Methodist hymn. It is sung to an old-fashioned tune, sometimes in a minor key, but it bears on its wings the pleading of earnest hearts. The object, at this stage of the service, is to quicken the faith and zeal of God's children and draw out their sympathy for the unconverted. Then follows an earnest, heartfelt prayer, to which there are a few timid responses (they will be more frequent and much heartier by-and-by). Another hymn is sung, and the preacher takes the stand for the opening sermon or exhortation as the case may be. The text is brief and pointed, and the sermon equally so. Without preliminary the opening words ring out distinct and clear, "Brethren,

pray." "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" or the like. No time this for learned exposition, but a splendid opportunity for exhortation, of which the speaker avails himself to the fullest extent. The praying brethren and sisters understand him perfectly. It is a trumpet-call to form the "far flung battle line," for well they know "the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." A prayer-meeting follows, in which earnest though uncultured men and women tell out in homely phrase their longing for a baptism of the Holy Spirit, or plead for the conversion of children and neighbours. The prayer-meeting ended, an intermission follows till the time of the evening service, which resembles that of the afternoon.

On the following day the people assemble in larger numbers and the interest deepens. In the early morning the voice of family devotion is heard in the tents. After breakfast a prayer-meeting is held in front of the stand, and some present themselves as seekers of full salvation. At ten o'clock there is preaching, again at two, and in the evening after the fires are lighted, each sermon followed by a lively exhortation and a prayer-meeting. The number of "seekers" has increased, and among them are some awakened sinners pleading for pardon. But these services are only preliminary skirmishes, preparatory to the decisive battle which is yet to come. By the end of the week (such meetings usually begin on Wednesday) the few hundreds present on the first day have increased to thousands it may be, and with anxious hearts the preachers and praying helpers survey the multitudes, hoping for a general "breaking down" before the Lord's day dawns. For the first two or three days the tide of battle ebbs and

flows, but victory always turns on Israel's side. As the decisive hour draws near interest is intensified. No one can tell when the culminating point will be reached, but come it will. Perhaps it is during an evening service. A multitude is there. Every seat is occupied, and on the outer circle hundreds are standing, most of them careless, unawakened people, some of them scoffers, and some of the rowdy type, it may be, bent on mischief. A chosen band of reliable men patrol the outskirts of the crowd, ready to check the first symptoms of disorder. On the stand all the preachers are seated, save the brother who is to officiate, and he is in the inner room, prostrate on the floor, his face resting on his open Bible, pleading with God "with groanings which cannot be uttered," for "grace to help in" this "time of need." Fires have been kindled on the light-stands, and the resinous pine roots send up shoots of flame that light up the whole encampment with a lurid glow and penetrate the gloom of the surrounding forest. What a scene for the pencil of a Rembrandt or the pen of a Dante! Nay, rather what a scene for the pen of inspiration; for these earthly lights and shadows are but tame, neutral tints compared with the stronger lights and shadows which sin and salvation cast athwart the human soul.

But now it is time for the service to begin. A hymn is sung, something to stir the martial ardour of every soldier of the cross, and hundreds of praying hearts respond to the challenge:

Hark, how the watchmen cry,
Attend the trumpet's sound!
Stand to your arms, the foe is nigh,
The powers of hell surround.

Who bow to Christ's command,
Your arms and hearts prepare!
The day of battle is at hand!
Go forth to glorious war!

Prayer follows, earnest, pleading, tender, and importunate by turns, as if the suppliant would storm the very mercy-seat and compel the blessing he so much desires. A portion of Scripture is read, something which bears upon the theme of the coming discourse, and then another hymn—a hymn of invitation, instinct with the gospel message:

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesu's guest;
Ye need not one be left behind,
For God hath bidden all mankind.

Very plaintive and entreating it sounds, as some tune in a minor key carries the words across the encampment and upward toward the listening stars.

And now the congregation settles down, and with faces turned toward the stand, where the preacher has just arisen to announce his text, await the message that is coming. The theme is in keeping with the circumstances of the hour: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." There is no display of learning, no graces of artificial oratory, but an intense earnestness that carries conviction to every heart. As the preacher proceeds, his soul kindles with an intense fervour which quickly reacts upon his susceptible audience, and the saints begin to respond with fervent "Amens," or to shout aloud for joy. And then, suddenly it may be, the grace of exhortation descends

upon the preacher; the repressed feelings of his soul overleap all barriers, and a torrent of expostulation, warning, entreaty, and appeal beats like a tempest in the faces of the spellbound multitude, who listen as if an angel spake to them. Pausing for a moment, as though to gather strength for a fresh effort, the silence is broken by the bitter cry of someone whom the Spirit's sword has wounded, quickly answered by another and yet another from different parts of the ground. A wave of deep emotion sweeps over the congregation, for they know the crisis of the battle has come; and the feeling is intensified when some careless onlookers, perhaps a scoffer at holy things, is seized with pungent conviction and falls to the earth with a loud cry as though stricken suddenly in battle. Before the bystanders have recovered from their amazement another and yet another is similarly affected, and in a short time a score, it may be, who up to that time were careless and unconcerned are now prostrate on the ground, some still and silent as if already dead, others convulsed with agony and crying aloud to God for mercy.

During this critical time the preachers have not been idle. Descending swiftly from the stand they make their way through the congregation, exhorting, instructing, praying, and pointing sinners to the Lamb of God. In a short time perhaps half a score of praying circles have been formed around the awakened ones, where parents are praying for their children, wives for their husbands, and neighbour for neighbour. In a church such a scene would be dire confusion; but out in the open air beneath the lofty dome of God's leafy temple, where each Christian

heart is intent upon the one thing of leading troubled souls to the source of peace, the confusion is scarcely noticed. Perhaps there comes a lull in the concert of prayer and a voice is lifted up in song. For the moment Charles Wesley's stately measures are laid aside and feeling finds expression in a homely camp-meeting melody with many repetitions. Such a stanza as

> Venture on Him,
> Venture on Him,
> Venture on Him just now,

may be very poor poetry, but it supplies just the direction and encouragement that the penitent seeker needs, and under its inspiration some do venture; they "step on the seeming void, and find the rock beneath." Then the shouts of victory begin to resound. Charles Wesley is recalled, and the woods re-echo the strains of his grand salvation hymn:

> My God is reconciled,
> His pardoning voice I hear,
> He owns me for His child,
> I can no longer fear,
> With confidence I now draw nigh,
> And Father, Abba, Father, cry!

The hours have passed almost unheeded, and there is regret when the service is brought to a close. Many find it hard to leave the sacred spot, and sometimes the midnight hour will pass ere sleep and silence settle down upon the scene.

The Sabbath is in some respects a great day. In the early morning prayer-meetings are going on in many of

the tents; at nine o'clock a fellowship-meeting begins, and many joyous testimonies are borne to Christ's saving power. The congregation is largely increased by people from the surrounding neighbourhoods who come in for the day. Sermons calculated to deepen the impression already made are delivered, followed by exhortation and prayer. And so the time passes until Tuesday or Wednesday, which is not only the last, but is also the great day of the feast. The morning prayer-meetings are unusually tender, for the time of parting is near. At nine o'clock or thereabout the love-feast begins, and for an hour and a half testimonies follow in rapid succession, mingled with strains of triumphant song. Perhaps there is a short discourse from an experienced preacher — words of counsel and encouragement that will be helpful alike to new convert and mature Christian as they return to their homes to face the toils and temptations of daily life. After this the sacramental bread is broken and the wine is poured, and preachers and people together commemorate, in that leafy temple, the dying love of their divine Redeemer, and anticipate the day when they shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. But one thing more remains to be done, and this is never omitted. After a short interval the preachers take their places in front of the stand, while the people, starting from the upper part of the ground, pass them in single file, receiving from each a cordial hand-shake and a word of counsel or of prayer. What marvel if every face is bathed in tears; for they have fought and triumphed together, and now they are about to part, some of them to meet no more till they pass beyond the river. But even in this solemn hour

faith triumphs over doubt and fear, and they lift their voices in victorious song:

And let our bodies part,
To different climes repair!
Inseparably joined in heart
The friends of Jesus are!
Jesus, the corner-stone,
Did first our hearts unite,
And still He keeps our spirits one,
Who walk with Him in white.

O let us still proceed
In Jesu's work below;
And, following our triumphant Head,
To farther conquests go!
The vineyard of the Lord
Before His labourers lies;
And lo! we see the vast reward
Which waits us in the skies.

O let our heart and mind
Continually ascend,
That haven of repose to find
Where all our labours end;
Where all our toils are o'er,
Our suffering and our pain!
Who meet on that eternal shore
Shall never part again.

The service is over, and now begins the preparation for departure. Tents are struck, household effects placed in vehicles ready to receive them, and soon the faithful few who have remained to the last are wending their way to their various homes. Meanwhile the itinerants have mounted their horses and turned their faces toward their distant fields of labour. For a few days they have enjoyed sweet communion and have been sitting "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"; now they go back to solitary

journeys, to hardship and privation, to loneliness and poverty; but their hearts are strong in the Lord, and no murmuring thought has place. For a time, perhaps, they ride together; but soon their ways diverge, and each rides forward alone, meditating on the goodness and faithfulness of God and planning fresh campaigns for the truth. Noble and heroic men, may your memories be ever kept green! Meanwhile, to us who linger a few moments by the deserted camp-ground there comes, mellowed by distance, the strains of a familiar hymn sung by a group of rejoicing converts as they wend their homeward way. Gradually this also melts into silence. The feast of tabernacles is ended.[1]

2. Pioneer Days in Newfoundland

The first to proclaim the saving truths of the gospel, as understood by Methodists, to the hardy and neglected fishermen around the rugged coasts of Newfoundland, was Lawrence Coughlan, a warm-hearted Irishman, converted to God in the early days of Methodism in his native country, and received into the itinerant ranks by Wesley in 1755. Being both zealous and diligent, he built up the societies where he laboured, especially by his fidelity in visiting from house to house; but he seems to have been deficient in staying power, which may account for some of his erratic movements. In the early sixties he embraced some novel views, as did Mr. Maxfield, respecting Christian perfection, and when convinced of

[1] The foregoing may be accepted as a fairly accurate sketch of a typical camp-meeting in the middle of the nineteenth century.

his mistake threw the blame on Wesley. This led to strained relations for a time, but in the following year the two seem to have been in full accord. Another step of Wesley's led to more serious results. In 1763, feeling the urgent need of ordained helpers, and knowing that he could not obtain the necessary (as he then thought) ordination from bishops of the Church of England, Wesley applied to Erasmus, a bishop of the Greek Church, who was visiting in England at the time, to ordain one of his lay itinerants. The bishop consented, but on the fact becoming known several other itinerants — Coughlan among the number—sought and obtained the same favour. This brought forth indignant remonstrance and protest from Charles Wesley, and the parties who had been ordained were offered the alternative of refraining from the exercise of their ministerial functions or removal from the Methodist Connexion. Coughlan, it would seem, was unwilling to submit, and withdrew from the itinerant ranks. But that his friendship with Wesley continued unbroken may be inferred from the correspondence of future years.

In 1765 Lawrence Coughlan is in Newfoundland. Under what auspices or impulse he was led to those rugged shores there are no contemporary records to tell, but read in the light of subsequent history we can ascribe his movements only to the guiding hand of God. He was not commissioned by any church nor appointed by any human authority, and we can only surmise that he heard, as did Paul, a divine mandate, "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Certain it is he could not have found a more needy field. The moral and religious condition

of the people was simply deplorable. Two clergymen of the Church of England were the only religious teachers on the island, one at St. John's and one at Trinity Bay; but around the shores of Conception Bay there was a population of more than five thousand souls utterly uncared for. About 80 per cent. of these were English or of English descent, chiefly from Dorsetshire; the rest were Irish Roman Catholics. So far as can be learned, no minister had ever visited these settlements up to the time of Coughlan's arrival, and it need not surprise us to learn that "the Sabbath was unknown; there was no person to celebrate marriage, and marriage was lightly regarded, while oppression, violence, profanity, and licentiousness were practised without any check."[1] In after-days an old Methodist, speaking of this period, said, "Imagine any sin you will, and you cannot think of anything too bad." Coughlan's testimony is equally emphatic: "As to the gospel, they had not the least notion of it. Drinking dancing, and gaming they were acquainted with; these they were taught by the Europeans who came annually to fish."[2]

Such was the unpromising material among which Lawrence Coughlan began his ministry. For more than a year he preached without apparent results, and yet he must have impressed the people, for they united in a request to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel that Mr. Coughlan might be appointed as missionary among them. The request was complied with, and Coughlan immediately went to England to receive

[1] Smith's *History of Methodism in Newfoundland*, p. 46.
[2] Wilson's *Newfoundland, its Missionaries.*

Episcopal ordination, from which we may infer that the English bishops did not recognise the validity of the ordination by Erasmus, or else that Coughlan kept that circumstance secret. In the autumn of 1767 he returned to Newfoundland and resumed his labours, teaching the people "publicly and from house to house." To the Irish he was able to preach in their native Celtic; and although they were Roman Catholics, numbers of them attended his ministry. But although Lawrence Coughlan was "instant in season, out of season," and longed with desire unspeakable for the salvation of souls, three long years passed without any visible results. Disheartened and discouraged, he prepared to leave the country, being determined—so he writes—that he would not stay in such a poor desolate land and spend his strength for nought. But in this, as in many another case, the time of man's extremity was God's opportunity. The Lord, whose presence the discouraged missionary had often invoked in vain, came suddenly to His temple, and the settlements around Conception Bay were swept by a mighty revival. The old indifference disappeared, and many, as Coughlan relates, "were pricked to the heart, and cried, 'What must we do to be saved?' Some prayed aloud, others shouted for joy, telling what God had done for their souls. . . . Under almost every sermon and exhortation some were cut to the heart, and others rejoiced in loud songs of praise."[1]

In the midst of these exciting scenes Coughlan's Wesleyan training was apparent, not only in the methods he employed but in the way in which he regarded the

[1] Coughlan's *Account of the Work of God in Newfoundland*.

outward manifestations of the Spirit's working. He had mourned over the absence of results, and now he was deeply concerned, as Wesley had been in England, lest the noisy demonstrations might redound to the injury of the work. As a true son of Wesley, Coughlan wrote regarding the crying out, "I never encouraged it, nor dare I speak directly against it." As he feared, the report did go abroad that the inhabitants of Harbour Grace and Carbonear had gone mad; but this only had the effect of bringing people from a distance of many miles to see and hear for themselves, and not a few "who came to scoff remained to pray." Thus the work spread around Conception Bay, and a marked change took place in the habits of the people. "Hours that had been wasted in Sabbath-breaking, drinking, gaming, and other prevalent vices, were now spent in praise, prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures."[1] At Black Head, about eighteen miles from Carbonear, the people were so desirous of having a place of worship that they went into the woods, cut down and prepared the necessary timber, and in less than fourteen days erected and covered in a building large enough to accommodate four hundred people. It is worthy of note that through all this period Coughlan, though an ordained clergyman of the Church of England, was a pronounced Methodist in experience, teaching, and plans of work. Writing to Wesley shortly before leaving Newfoundland, he affirms, "I am and do confess myself to be a Methodist. The name I love, and hope I ever shall. The plan which you first taught me I have followed, both as to doctrine and discipline. Our married

[1] Smith's *History*, p. 50.

men meet apart once a week, and our married women do the same. This has given great offence, so that repeated complaints have been made to the Governor. But truth is mighty, and will prevail. In the winter I go from house to house, and expound some part of God's word. This has also given great offence. "But God is above men, devils, and sin."[1]

Mission work in Newfoundland at the present time, though a railway spans the island and commodious steamships ply between distant ports, is no child's play; but in the old pioneer days it involved hardships of no ordinary kind. Coughlan had an unconquerable dread of the sea when sailing in small boats, which made his life "one continued martyrdom." In many houses which he visited the accommodation was very poor, and on a winter's morning it was no uncommon thing to find a covering of snow upon the bed, and his shoes so frozen that they must be thawed before they were put on. But trials of this description were by no means the worst. His plain, faithful preaching stirred the enmity of the carnal mind. Some who had supported the missionary denounced his preaching as madness, and threatened to withdraw their aid. But Coughlan was not a man to be cowed in that fashion. On the very next Sunday he took his text from the words of Paul to Festus, "I am not mad," and proceeded to show that while drunkards, swearers, and such-like might justly be called mad, the term could not fairly be applied to those who feared God and wrought righteousness. Failing to intimidate the preacher by the threat of withdrawing support, a petition was sent to the Governor,

[1] Published in the *Arminian Magazine*, 1785.

containing slanderous statements, and asking that Coughlan be silenced or banished. But when brought up for examination, his innocence was completely established. Exasperated by their failure, Coughlan's enemies even conspired to take his life, but were foiled by the doctor, who discovered the plot and put him on his guard.

Hardship, exposure, and opposition were telling upon Coughlan's body and mind, and he resolved to return to England, which he did in the latter part of 1773. His connexion with the S.P.G. seems to have ceased at the same time, probably by mutual consent. To have served in the Church of England would have been impracticable for a man of his temperament and habits; for in writing to Wesley shortly before his return, he says, "To be shut up in a little parish church, and to conform in every little thing for sixty or a hundred pounds a year, I would not; no, not for even a thousand." In 1776 we find him ministering in a chapel in Cumberland Street, London; but under what auspices does not appear. Application was made to Wesley for a circuit, but Coughlan's work was done. While conversing with Wesley in his study he was seized with paralysis. How long he lingered we do not know; but Wesley was with him shortly before his departure, as appears from a letter to John Stretton, of Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, in which the writer says, "The last time I saw Mr. Coughlan he was ill in body, but in a blessed state of mind. He was utterly broken in pieces, full of tears and contrition for his past unfaithfulness. Not long after I went out of town God removed him to a better place."[1] So ended the life and

[1] Wesley's *Works*, American edition, xii. 226.

labours of Lawrence Coughlan, a veritable pioneer of Methodism in a hard field, possessing many of the sterling qualities which distinguished the workers of that early day, and some of the infirmities which detracted from the value of a useful career.

When Coughlan left Newfoundland the societies at Carbonear and Harbour Grace were for a time as sheep without a shepherd. But in these societies were some devoted laymen upon whose hearts the burden of souls was laid, and these began to stir up the gift that was in them, and by exhortation and prayer strove to edify the faithful and lead sinners to Christ. The names of very few of these men have come down to us, but by common consent the foremost place is given to John Stretton of Harbour Grace. Like Coughlan, he was an Irishman, a native of Limerick, where his father and mother were among the early friends of Wesley. The son removed to Waterford, where he engaged in a branch of the Newfoundland trade. With the view of increasing his business, he resolved to remove to that colony; but shortly before his departure he was led to a saving knowledge of Christ, chiefly through the efforts of Mrs. Eliza Bennis, a devoted Methodist at Limerick. On reaching Newfoundland he immediately connected himself with the Methodist Society, and remained steadfast to the end.

The action of the magistrates at Harbour Grace gave cause for anxiety. They "took possession of the church, read prayers and preached on alternate Sabbaths, with the intention of holding the building until the arrival of Coughlan's successor."[1] For this action of the magistrates

[1] Smith's *History*, p. 62.

there was some show of justification. Coughlan, though an avowed Methodist, was an ordained clergyman of the Church of England, and in the employ of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It was not surprising, therefore, that the magistrates regarded the church as belonging to that communion. Their further action in refusing to allow the Methodist class to meet in the church on Sunday evenings, as had been the custom, was less kind, and savoured of persecution; but even this hardly justifies the strong language of Stretton that "Mr. Arthur Thorney and I . . . resolved to oppose the torrent of iniquity." Be that as it may, it was evident something must be done for the scattered society. Says Stretton, "We gathered a few together who loved the Lord Jesus, and found among them a poor fisherman who was not ashamed of his heavenly Master, but boldly stood up and spoke in His name." Not the first time that a "poor fisherman" has been a faithful witness for Christ. In providing the necessary discipline for the society, which numbered about thirty, "we drew up the rules," says Stretton, "as like Wesley's as we could, consistently with local circumstances"; which probably would have drawn from Wesley the comment, had he been aware of the action, "Don't mend our rules, but keep them."

These Newfoundland Methodists were no laggards in religious duties. Arthur Thorney, writing to Coughlan, tells how Christmas Day was spent: "We assembled at J. P.'s at five in the morning, sang praises, and prayed and exhorted, and every heart rejoiced in our Christ. We continued thus till eight o'clock, had prayers at ten, and again at three in the afternoon, and our dear

Lord continued present all the day. At night we had a love-feast at S.'s (formerly your house), and such a blessed meeting we never saw." It was about this time that Stretton began to speak in public, "in great fear of being one of those who run before they are sent." Prompted by the constraining love of Christ, Stretton and Thorney began to extend their labours to other settlements around Conception Bay, and across the country to Heart's Content on Trinity Bay. In some places their efforts were crowned with marked success. At St. John's they had pleasant fellowship with a little group of Congregationalists, who, in the face of strong opposition, had erected a neat little meeting-house; while at Old Perlican they found that the gospel message had already been carried there by another faithful though unlikely messenger.

An Englishman, John Hoskins by name, first heard Methodist preaching in 1746, and, as he tells us, "the word fell on my soul as dew on the tender herb." At the age of fifty-six he decided to go to New England, purposing to keep school and do what he could for the salvation of men; but means were scant, and he took passage for Newfoundland, intending to work there for money to pay the further passage of himself and son. On reaching Trinity Bay five weeks later he found himself without friends and money, but rejoicing exceedingly that he was "under the care and protection of an almighty and all-gracious God." By the advice of Mr. Balfour, the Episcopal missionary, he crossed the bay to Perlican, seven leagues distant. The people, who had mostly come from rural districts in England, seemed glad at his coming, as they had no one to teach their

children. Though without any missionary or any religious ordinances, they seemed to have some concern for spiritual things, for they invited Hoskins to read prayers and a sermon on the Lord's day, an invitation which he gladly accepted. Writing to Wesley, he says, "I read the church prayers and some of your sermons, and sung your hymns by myself alone, for many weeks. For my congregation did not know how to behave in divine service, not even to kneel in prayer, or sing at all, but would stand at a distance and look at me as if I had been a monster." And yet these people were not insensible to the truth. Some became thoughtful and knelt during prayer, and before long six or seven were found seeking salvation. These were formed into a class, and the number increased. In the winter of 1778 there was a sudden work of awakening, and several found peace with God. When Hoskins visited England in the winter of 1778–79 the people of Old Perlican applied through Wesley to the Bishop of London, Dr. Lowth, to ordain him as their minister; but their request was refused. This drew from Wesley a letter that for Christian fidelity and plainness of speech, but without tincture of animosity, has rarely if ever been equalled. I quote the letter at large, not for the reason just mentioned, however, but because it turns a searchlight of unusual intensity upon the religious conditions of the time:

10*th August* 1780.

"My Lord,—Some time since I received your lordship's favour, for which I return your lordship my sincere thanks. Those persons (at Old Perlican) did not apply

to the society (the S.P.G.) because they had nothing to ask them. They wanted no salary for their minister; they were themselves able and willing to maintain him. They therefore applied by me to your lordship, as members of the Church of England, and desirous so to continue, begging the favour of your lordship, after your lordship had examined him, to ordain a pious man who might officiate as their minister.

"But your lordship observes, 'There are three ministers in that country already.' True, my lord; but what are three to watch over all the souls in that extensive country? Will your lordship permit me to speak freely? I dare not do otherwise. I am on the verge of the grave, and know not the hour when I shall drop into it. Suppose there were threescore of those missionaries in the country, could I in conscience recommend these souls to their care? Do they take any care of their own souls? If they do (I speak it with concern), I fear they are almost the only missionaries in America that do. My lord, I do not speak rashly. I have been in America, and so have several with whom I have lately conversed; and both I and they know what manner of men the far greater part of these are. They are men who have neither the power of religion nor the form; men that can lay no claim to piety, nor even decency.

"Give me leave, my lord, to speak more freely still: perhaps it is the last time I shall trouble your lordship. I know your lordship's abilities and extensive learning; I believe, what is far more, that your lordship fears God. I have heard that your lordship is unfashionably diligent in examining the candidates for holy orders; yea, that your lordship is generally at the pains of examining them yourself. *Examining them.* In what respect? Why, whether they understand a little Latin and Greek, and can answer a few trite questions in the science of divinity. Alas, how little does this avail! Does

your lordship examine whether they serve Christ or Belial? Whether they love God or the world? Whether they ever had any serious thoughts about heaven or hell? Whether they have any real desire to save their own souls, or the souls of others? If not, what have they to do with holy orders? and what will become of the souls committed to their care?

"My lord, I do by no means despise learning: I know the value of it too well. But what is this, particularly in a Christian minister, compared to piety? What is it in a man that has no religion?—'As a jewel in a swine's snout.'

"Some time ago I recommended to your lordship a plain man, whom I had known above twenty years, as a person of deep, genuine piety, and of unblamable conversation. But he neither understood Greek nor Latin; and he affirmed, in so many words, that he believed it was his duty to preach, whether he was ordained or no. I believe so too. What became of him since, I know not; but I suppose he received Presbyterian ordination; and I cannot blame him if he did. He might think any ordination better than none.

"I do not know that Mr. Hoskins has any favour to ask of the society (the S.P.G.). He asked the favour of your lordship to ordain him, that he might minister to a little flock in America. But your lordship did not see good to ordain him; but your lordship did see good to ordain, and send into America, other persons who knew something of Greek and Latin, but who knew no more of saving souls than of catching whales.

"In this respect also I mourn for poor America, for the sheep scattered up and down therein. Part of them have no shepherd at all, especially in the northern colonies; and the case of the rest is little better, for their own shepherds pity them not. They cannot, for they have no pity on themselves. They take no thought or care about their own souls.

"Wishing your lordship every blessing from the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, I remain, my lord, your lordship's dutiful son and servant,

"JOHN WESLEY."[1]

But although Episcopal sanction of Hoskins' work was denied, the Holy Spirit's influence was not withheld! While the worker was yet in England the work revived, and Old Perlican had a day of gracious visitation. Numbers were awakened and converted, among them Hoskins' own son. Thorney went over from Harbour Grace to render what assistance he could. But, as might have been expected, the spirit of opposition was aroused in its most savage form. Men armed with clubs went to the room where Thorney was preaching, and swore they would kill him; but several persons interfered, and the disturbance was quelled. Meanwhile Hoskins returned to Newfoundland and resolved to extend his labours to Trinity; but the influential men of the place were bitterly hostile, and no one dared open his house for preaching. After several days of apparently fruitless effort, Hoskins went on board a vessel to ask passage from a merchant on a boat that was to sail for Old Perlican. No sooner had he stepped on board than a sailor rudely asked, "Will you preach us a sermon?" and immediately struck him in the face with a brush filled with tar; whereupon some sailors seized and held him, while others nearly covered him with tar. The merchant and captain, so far from rebuking the sailors, encouraged them in their brutality, and as Hoskins left the ship a piece of wood was flung at him. Strange results followed this outrage. I quote from Smith's

[1] Wesley's *Works*, American edition, vol. vii. p. 230.

History, pp. 74, 75: "The captain and the merchant soon became ashamed of the transaction to which they had given their approval, and the immediate actors in it were visited with speedy retribution. In the course of a month one fell overboard and was drowned in the harbour; another on the passage to England was killed by a fall; and the man who administered the tar received a death-wound from an accident on board the vessel, and died in great agony of mind on account of the share he had taken in the guilty deed. Certain appearances connected with the retribution, which may have been the results of an accusing conscience, but which he believed to be real, made such an impression upon the captain's mind that, on his return to Newfoundland, he boldly assured the merchants of Trinity that he would not for all the world abuse Hoskins, or any other preacher of the gospel."

In 1785 Newfoundland appeared in the English Minutes for the first time, and appended thereto is the name of John M'Geary, whom Stretton speaks of as "a good man and a good preacher." He had travelled among the American itinerants for a time, but returned to England in 1784. He may have been "a good man," as Stretton observes, and also a "good preacher," but seems to have been flighty and unstable to a degree; a proof that even Wesley, with his remarkable penetration, did not always "size up" his men correctly. Before he had been a month at Carbonear, Stretton wrote, "Everything here appears so disagreeable to Mr. M'Geary that I fear he will not abide long." He did remain for some time, however, but failed to adapt himself to surrounding conditions, and was soon out of harmony with both Stretton

and Hoskins. He must have complained bitterly to Wesley, for the latter wrote to William Black of Nova Scotia, when M'Geary had been about sixteen months in Newfoundland, saying, "Poor John M'Geary appears to be utterly discouraged, not only through want of success, but through want of the conveniences, yea, necessaries of life. Truly, if I could have supposed a preacher to want bread, I should have sent him into other parts where he would have wanted nothing." The difficulties of the situation were further emphasised by disagreement between Hoskins and Stretton, and at times Wesley was sorely perplexed. He admits that M'Geary was "naturally of a bold, forward temper," and in a letter to Stretton, written in 1789, he laments that he "cannot find any union between you northern preachers," for "each seems to be afraid of the other." M'Geary put the finishing touch on his imprudent course by marrying the daughter of a planter, without her father's consent. This ended his influence, which was not great at any time, and in the autumn of 1788 he returned to England, leaving little or no fruit of his labours behind him, save dissensions and heart-burnings. In the same year Stretton began the erection of a church at Harbour Grace at his own expense, and it was opened for worship in August. "This," he writes, "is the only thing at present that keeps up the Protestant name in the place. The Protestant minister is worse than none, and few go to church; while popery, like a deluge, sweeps away all the rest." At the end of 1790 the report was no better. "This place," he writes, "is like Sodom in everything but fulness of bread, and I am here alone, with not one family heartily religious that I can

associate with, or hold any profitable converse with, all this dreary winter."

In 1791 William Black visited Newfoundland, and this may be said to mark a new era in the progress of Methodism in the island. By this time few traces of Coughlan's work at Carbonear and Harbour Grace remained; but under Black's first sermon at the former place many were deeply affected. On the following Sunday the impressions were greatly deepened. On Tuesday evening, during the sermon, "some began to cry out," says Black. "I stopped preaching, and began to pray. My voice was soon drowned. I left the pulpit and went up and down the church, exhorting those that were wounded and crying for mercy to look unto Jesus as their only Redeemer. . . . About thirty were under deep distress. . . . I requested those who were in distress to withdraw to Brother M'Geary's house,[1] but they would not leave the church." The foregoing is a fair sample of the entries in Black's journal during his sojourn in Newfoundland. Not less than two hundred souls were converted in the settlements around Conception Bay during these services, and the work was permanent. Before his departure Black administered the communion to about one hundred and thirty persons, and "an awful sense of the divine presence seemed to pervade every heart." The love-feast that followed was simply in-

[1] This was the same M'Geary of whom so much has been said; but there is a discrepancy in dates which it is difficult to reconcile. Smith's *History*, p. 279, informs us that M'Geary returned to England in 1788, but when Black reached Carbonear in 1791 he found M'Geary there. Smith further says, p. 281, that "during the preceding year M'Geary had returned to that station." This may be correct, although I have been unable to verify the fact from any other source.

describable. "It was hard work to tear away from them," writes Black. "I was nearly an hour shaking hands with them, some twice and thrice over, and even then we hardly knew how to part; but I at last rushed from among them, and left them weeping as for an only son." It appears that M'Geary remained but a short time after Black's departure. He returned to England, and at the Conference of 1792 was appointed to a circuit; but in the following year withdrew from the ministry—a final proof of his unstable character.

There is much more which belongs to the early period of Methodism in this interesting field, but enough has been written to give an idea of "pioneer days in Newfoundland."

3. Pioneer Days in the Maritime Provinces

Nova Scotia is supposed by some to be identical with the Markland of the Norse sagas; and if this is correct, it gives it priority, in point of discovery, over the discoveries of Columbus and Americus Vespuccius, of more than five hundred years. Of these early days it is not necessary to speak, nor of the period of French occupation down to the time, 1710, when Acadia was conquered by an army from the New England colonies, and the French flag disappeared from that part of the New World, though it was not till nearly half a century later that it finally disappeared from Cape Breton by the capture and destruction of Louisburg. By the Peace of Utrecht various places and territories—the long-disputed province of Nova Scotia among the number—were recognised as dependencies of the British

Crown. But the recognition of England's supremacy in Nova Scotia did not secure her in peaceable possession of the coveted territory. The French settlers, or Acadians as they were called, refused to take the oath of allegiance to the British monarch, and being stimulated to at least passive resistance by their priests, who were in constant communication with the French of Cape Breton and Canada, they became a dangerous menace to the stable government of the country. After persistent efforts by successive Governors, extending over a period of nearly forty years, to secure their peaceable submission, the English Government resolved upon the unprecedented step of removing the Acadians by force from their settlements and dispersing them among the New England and other colonies. Whatever may be said in vindication of this harsh measure, it is impossible to reconcile it with modern ideas of justice or humanity, and it is referred to here only because of its bearing upon the future settlement of the country.

The expulsion of this irreconcilably disloyal element from the population left some of the richest agricultural districts in Nova Scotia unoccupied and untilled, and so they remained for several years. But in 1758 Lieutenant-Governor Lawrence issued a proclamation with the view of inducing people from the New England colonies to come to Nova Scotia and take possession of the vacant lands. As the proclamation made no reference to freedom of conscience and of religious worship, the New England colonists, imbued with the spirit of their Puritan ancestry, hesitated to accept the Governor's invitation, fearing a course similar to that pursued by the authorities of New York and Virginia. This induced Governor Lawrence to

issue a second proclamation, in which full religious liberty was guaranteed to all Protestants; and on the strength of this assurance a large number of settlers came from New England, and were subsequently followed by others from across the sea.

A still more marked effect on the religious future of the country was produced by the arrival, in 1772, under the influence of Lieutenant-Governor Franklin, of a party of emigrants from Yorkshire, who settled in Cumberland county. They were followed by other detachments in each of the three succeeding years, constituting altogether a considerable number. These settlers were thoroughly British in sentiment, and not a few of them were Methodists of the true Yorkshire type. Their influence on the eve of the revolutionary war was, from a political point of view, most salutary, and their religious fervour was no less salutary in other directions. An Episcopal clergyman who resided at Cumberland spoke of these Yorkshire emigrants, when reporting to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, as "a peaceable, industrious people, and lovers of the constitution under which they were born."

It would be a pleasant task to give some account of these pioneer Methodists in the maritime provinces, but space forbids. I cannot refrain, however, from calling attention to two families,—one because of its connexion with the past, the other because of its influence upon the future. William Wells senior was among the first Methodists who came to Nova Scotia. His former home appears to have been at Thirsk in Yorkshire, and he was the builder of the Wesleyan chapel in that place, concerning which the following characteristic entry appears in Wesley's

Journal, under date of 29th April 1766: "I preached at noon in the new house at Thirsk, almost equal to that at Yarm: and why not quite, seeing they had the model before their eyes, and had nothing to do but to copy after it? Is it not an amazing weakness that when they have the most beautiful pattern before them all builders will affect to mend something? . . . and the second building scarce ever equals the first." Concerning the wife of William Wells, and the coming of the family to Nova Scotia, we have the following: "Margaret, the wife of William Wells, was a native of Sowerby, near Thirsk, and was converted in youth. Wesley and John Nelson made their home at her father's house, when in that part of Yorkshire. She had spent some time under John Nelson's roof, and had heard both Wesley and Nelson preach at Thirsk Cross, when they were pelted with stones and rotten eggs, and such other offensive things as came to hand. Previous to their departure for America, Wesley knelt in prayer with Mr. and Mrs. Wells, and with a hand on the head of each commended them to the divine protection."[1] In his new home Wells led a class in his own house, and frequently conducted public services.

A variety of circumstances conspired to render the new home of the Yorkshire Methodists unfavourable to religious growth. There was but one minister in the country—the Rev. John Eagleson; distance from any place of worship and bad roads made attendance at religious services difficult; while the unsettled state of the country, owing to the revolt of the American colonies, and religious

[1] Smith's *History of Methodism in Eastern British America*, vol. i. pp. 85, 86.

divisions among the people, tended still further to demoralise the settlers. But God did not forget them. In 1779 the Divine Spirit, which like the wind "bloweth where it listeth," began to breathe over Cumberland. The spirit of prayer revived. Meetings for prayer and exhortation increased in frequency. Not a few persons became the subjects of deep religious convictions, and some entered upon the conscious experience of sins forgiven. Among those thus graciously visited was the family of William Black, whose former home was Huddersfield, Yorkshire. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Black, four sons, and one daughter. The death of the mother in 1775, a year after the arrival of the family at Amherst, was an irreparable loss, as she seems to have been a godly woman whose example and influence could ill be spared by her children in a land where religious opportunities were few and temptations to sin were many. At the time when the revival began, the spiritual declension of the whole family seems to have been complete. In the strong language of one of the sons, "Nothing but discord, jealousy, and ill-will were there. Peace had for some time left our dwelling, and we, hurried on by devilish passions, were urging fast to ruin."

But God had a purpose of mercy concerning this family, especially one member thereof, which He alone could foresee. All the members of the household seem to have come under the Holy Spirit's influence, and one of the first to emerge from the darkness of condemnation into the light of conscious pardon and the favour of God was the second son, William, then in his nineteenth year. Like many another "chosen vessel," William had been the subject of deep religious impressions from his earliest

years. He tells how, in his fifth and sixth years, he had serious impressions, sometimes so pungent that he wished he were anything but what he was. Repeatedly his godly mother besought him with tears to yield to God; but, though deeply affected, he did not then find the way of peace, and in his new home he sought in simple pleasures an opiate for a troubled conscience. When the Holy Spirit began to work among the people, William Black's convictions returned with redoubled force. For weeks he walked in darkness and had no light, weeping, fasting, praying with others till midnight or dawn of morning; conviction of sin grew only the deeper, until in utter despair he was tempted to rush into eternity that he might know the worst. But, as in many another case, the darkest hour was just before the dawn. While attending a neighbourhood prayer-meeting, and while friends around him were singing, with true Yorkshire fervour,

> My pardon I claim,
> For a sinner I am,
> A sinner believing in Jesus's name,

the Lord revealed Himself to the soul of William Black as the "mighty to save," and in an instant the burden was gone, the darkness vanished, and "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," took possession of his heart. The conversion of any soul, no matter how humble, is an event in the history of the universe whose value no human arithmetic can compute; but there are some conversions that mark distinct turning-points in the growth of the divine kingdom, and reveal in clearest light the guiding Providence of God. Such was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, of Martin Luther, of John Wesley, and many

others; and such, though in a narrower sphere, was the conversion of William Black. He was not destined to attain a world-wide celebrity like the others just mentioned; but his conversion was the beginning of an epoch in the religious history of Nova Scotia, and out of it came divine influences that have not yet ceased to operate.

Those whom God calls to a great work must learn to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," and William Black was no exception to the rule. The sharp conflicts through which he passed in his earlier religious experience were a needed part of the discipline by which he was trained for future usefulness. His deep depression when under conviction of sin qualified him to guide and sympathise with those who were struggling in the "horrible pit and the miry clay," and his after-conflicts with fierce temptations qualified him no less to be a wise counsellor of perplexed Christians. There were times when he was sorely tempted to doubt the reality of his own conversion, and even to doubt the existence of God; and then came the tormenting doubt that he could not be a Christian, or such wicked thoughts could never arise. All attempts to overcome his doubts by argument resulted in failure, but when he cried to God in earnest prayer the victory was won and the temptations vanished as suddenly as they came. Concerning his spiritual state at this time, Mr. Black writes in a strain to make one long for a return to the Church of these old-time experiences: "My days did glide swiftly away. I could eat my bread in singleness of heart, praising God. I went up to His house with gladness, and entered His courts with praise. His people were my dearest companions. My Sabbaths became the most

delightful days in all the year. They were market-days to my soul: I fed on marrow and fat things. Time, I saw, was exceedingly precious, and I desired to improve every moment. I could not bear that a single moment should pass without being filled up for God."

Another evidence of the genuineness of the change wrought in William Black is found in the fact that his first efforts to do good were among those of his own household. Within a very few days his father, two brothers, and a sister were led into the light. Thus encouraged, his labours extended. In co-operation with three other young men of like mind, he visited three outlying settlements and was cheered by tokens of good. But the good work was not unopposed. "Hard names were plentifully bestowed upon them, but in one instance only did hostility assume a violent form. On that occasion the officer in command at Fort Cumberland, in consequence of representations made to him by the Episcopal minister of the district, deemed it his duty to suppress the meetings, and for that purpose sent a party of soldiers, who made prisoners of more than twenty of the congregation, and carried them to the fort, where they were detained for two hours. The officer, who soon learned his mistake, was glad to dismiss his prisoners with soft words."[1]

Concurrently with these labours, the conviction grew in the heart of William Black that God was calling him to a wider field. As yet he had not attempted to preach, in the sense of announcing and expounding a passage of Scripture, but contented himself with earnest exhortations to men to "repent and believe the gospel," and it was not until he

[1] Smith's *History of Methodism*, pp. 96, 97.

began to itinerate at large that his practice in this respect was changed. On attaining his majority in 1781 he prepared to go forth, as did Abraham, "not knowing whither he went." With no church or society behind him to assure him of support, or any pledge from those to whom he went, he cast himself upon the promise that his bread should be given and his water sure. The prospect, from a worldly point of view, was not alluring, and would have daunted a less devoted man. Before him lay a territory which now constitutes the three provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, aggregating over 50,000 square miles in extent; and although much of it was yet unoccupied, there were numerous small settlements at points widely separated, from Yarmouth to Cape North and from Halifax to Baie Chaleur, not to speak of the settlements forming on Prince Edward Island, then known as the Island of St. John. To reach these isolated communities required long, wearisome, and sometimes dangerous journeys, and the heroic itinerant knew, like Paul, what it was to be "in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." But again, like Paul, he could say, "None of these things move me."

The somewhat heterogeneous character of the population, their religious prejudices, and the social and political conditions of the times, were all factors in the problem, and added to its difficulty. In some places remnants of the Acadian settlers still lingered; groups of Germans from Pennsylvania or the Fatherland had formed small settlements; New England families moved in and took possession of the farms from which the Acadians had

been forcibly removed; fishermen from Nantucket and around Cape Cod located where Liverpool, Barrington, and Yarmouth now stand, while others from the "west country" began a settlement at St. Margaret's Bay. English, Scotch, and Irish emigrants were well represented at many points, while Huguenots and others from Switzerland found homes at Tatmagouche. These varied elements were reinforced a little later by the bands of U.E. Loyalists who, during or after the revolutionary struggle, left the American colonies and sought refuge under the old flag they loved so well.

Excluding the Indians and Acadians, the population of Nova Scotia was almost entirely Protestant, but in Cape Breton perhaps two thirds were Roman Catholics. At this period four points in the province were occupied by Episcopal clergymen—namely, Halifax, Lunenburg, Fort Cumberland, and Windsor—and one clergyman of the same order laboured in Prince Edward Island. The immigrants from New England were, for the most part, Congregationalists, and the churches they established were of that order. But being dependent upon New England for pastors, and the churches there being characterised by the absence of spiritual life, it was not to be expected that the stream would rise higher than its source. Moreover, the revolutionary war had a disastrous effect on these churches. Not a few of the members, being in sympathy with their old friends and neighbours, returned to New England, and the "New Light" movement (of which more anon) completed the disintegration which the revolution began. There was but one Baptist Church in the province, based on open communion principles, and

three or four Presbyterian clergymen ministered to congregations at various points; but Presbyterianism at that period was not distinguished by the evangelical and aggressive spirit which is its chief glory to-day. Indeed, with every disposition to be charitable, it may be doubted if at that time among the Protestant clergy of Nova Scotia there was one who could be classed as evangelical, in the present-day sense of that term, or who was competent to instruct a sin-burdened soul in the way of life and salvation.

This was the condition of affairs at the time when William Black was about to begin his itinerating ministry, and it was at the same time that the New Light movement was in progress in Nova Scotia under the labours of Henry Alline. The latter belonged to a type not uncommon in times of great spiritual declension, whose teaching, spirit, and aims are in marked contrast with the lifeless orthodoxy, or equally lifeless heterodoxy, of the churches of their day. He had passed through spiritual exercises almost rivalling in their intensity those of John Bunyan. His conscience was never at rest, and the terrors of death and judgment haunted him by night and day for twenty years. When deliverance came it was like noonday breaking suddenly through the gloom of midnight, and profound depression gave place to the most rapturous joy. That such an experience should be followed by a desire to proclaim the gospel to others was natural, but, conscious of educational deficiencies, Alline endeavoured to reach New England that the lack might be supplied. Failing to obtain a passage, he returned and began to proclaim his message, first among his friends and neighbours, and afterwards among the English-speaking

settlements throughout the province. Alline's preaching was intensely emotional, and this being in marked contrast with the ordinary preaching of the time, it powerfully affected the people. Though the period of his ministry was short (he was converted at twenty-seven years of age and died at thirty-six), other preachers from among his converts were raised up, men of the same fervid and zealous type as himself, and as these passed from settlement to settlement, there was a veritable shaking among the dry bones. "Families were divided; neighbours became opposed to each other; pastors preached and published in vain endeavour to stem the tide, and, failing, submitted to the inevitable; old church organisations were broken down and new organisations set up in their places."[1] The effect of the whole movement cannot be better described than in the words of the Rev. J. Davis, in his *Memoirs of Harris Harding*: "It happened in Nova Scotia as in New England. First there was torpor. Then the shock of newly discovered truth. Then agitation and alarm. Then separations, with dislike and heart-burnings. Then a rushing into extremes, on this side and that. Then reconsideration. The whole resulting in the restored recognition of the vital elements of the gospel, with a return to the decency and order of gospel institutions." Of the sincerity of Alline, his devotion and godly zeal, there can be no doubt; but like many another poorly instructed scribe, his views were narrow and rigid, with a strong tincture of mysticism, and his theology, if he could be credited with such a possession, was a strange jumble of incongruous elements, in which Christian per-

[1] Smith's *History*, p. 107.

fection and antinomian licence, human freedom and the final perseverance of the saints were "unequally yoked together." Of the organisations he formed nothing is left. Some of his converts subsequently found their way into Methodist churches, but the bulk of them, together with his successors in the ministry, gradually embraced the views of the close communion Baptists.

While this movement was in progress, William Black left his home in the autumn of 1781, and began those remarkable itinerating labours that were to end only with his life. Of systematic theology he knew but little, and this is no cause for regret in view of the work to which he was called. The Nova Scotia churches of that day had been fed on the dry husks of a lifeless orthodoxy, and the average conception of Christian living was a cold morality divorced from vital godliness. The preaching of Alline had rudely shaken the confidence of many, and in the revulsion of feeling which followed it is not surprising that they often rushed to the opposite extreme, and were governed more by "frames and feelings" than by Scripture and common sense. William Black was mercifully guided in a different path. From the time of his conversion he was a diligent student of the Holy Scriptures, and his association in class-meetings and prayer-meetings with Methodists of the Yorkshire type had rendered him familiar not only with their phraseology, but also with their intellectual conception of evangelical Christianity as taught by Wesley and his itinerants. This conception was deepened and intensified by the spiritual exercises preceding and accompanying his own conversion. While his theological system, if such it might be called, was

by no means elaborate, it embraced the essentials, and the "three R's"—Ruin by sin, Redemption by Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Spirit—were enforced everywhere with all earnestness and fidelity. The marked difference between the two men and the work they accomplished is seen in the results. The Whitefieldian appeals of Alline were mighty to arouse the careless and the formal, and by them many were turned from sin to righteousness; but of the fruit of his labours no organised trace now remains, and his brief but fiery ministry is a dim tradition that grows fainter as the years go by. If the preaching of William Black did not arouse such a tempest of emotion, the feeling was deeper and more abiding; his converts were gathered into classes where provision was made for their Christian nurture, and by wisely administered discipline, after the Wesleyan pattern, the permanence of the work was assured. Not only are the name and memory of William Black enshrined in multitudes of grateful hearts, but the work he did underlies to this day all that is best and purest in the Methodism of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

In the early days Methodist preachers were men of one aim—the salvation of souls. For this they preached and prayed and suffered. Their theology was not broad, perhaps, but it was deep and high; deep as the ruin into which men had fallen, high as the heaven to which they might ascend. Their "arrows" were not highly polished, but they were "sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies." Aiming always at direct and immediate results, they could not fail to achieve them. Among the leaders of the soul-saving brigade William Black holds an honoured place.

The end and aim of his preaching was to bring lost sinners to God, and his expectations were not disappointed. In the record of his first evangelistic tours it is instructive and interesting to note entries like the following: "Many were deeply affected." One "sturdy servant of the devil" cried aloud for mercy. Perceived that the word had "taken root in many minds." Many "were much affected, and wept most of the time." "Jesus was in the midst both to wound and to comfort." "Others who came with heavy hearts returned home greatly rejoiced." No cooked-up reports these, but veritable bulletins from the field of battle. When shall we listen to their like again?

After a journey which occupied eighteen days, during which he preached twenty-four times, Black returned to Amherst. Here he found the antinomian leaven of Alline's teaching beginning to work with disastrous effect, and he sorrowfully records that "many sucked in the poison as if it had been the marrow of the gospel." For about six weeks he confined his labours to contiguous settlements,—Amherst, Fort Lawrence, Point de Bute, and Sackville,—and in January 1782 set off with a friend on snowshoes to visit outlying settlements. It could hardly be called a pleasure trip. At the French village "a little straw for a bed and two yards of wrapper to cover them" was a poor protection from the severe cold; but to find, a little later, one "set at liberty," another rejoicing in deliverance from guilt, and yet another receiving "the spirit of adoption," more than compensated for the hardships of the journey. On his return to Cumberland, Black found not a few causes of anxiety. Religious strife had not only divided some of the societies, but had lowered the

spiritual tone of many more. Persons suitable to lead classes or conduct public services were hard to find, and without such services vital godliness was not likely to flourish. At this time Black was little more than a boy, with scant experience and no training for his work. The wonder is that he accomplished so much and made so few mistakes; and it can be accounted for only on the ground of his singleness of aim and entire dependence upon God.

Black's next journey was in a new direction, and he entered upon it, as he tells us, "deeply dejected." But it was not long before the sun broke through the gathering clouds and cheered him with the promise of brighter days. He preached whenever opportunity offered, sometimes in Baptist churches of the open communion order, sometimes in private houses, and nearly always with a sense of God's presence and with many tokens of His favour. The character of his preaching may be inferred from the texts of his sermons. Now it was, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"; again, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; and yet again, "Fight the good fight of faith." At Cornwallis "a spirit of tenderness pervaded the assembly," while at Horton many "cried for mercy, while others shouted hosannahs to the Son of David."[1] At Windsor the itinerant found a few Methodists whom he formed into a class under the leadership of John Smith, formerly of Yarm, Yorkshire, who on occasion had acted as precentor when Wesley preached in the market-place of that town. On the 5th of June 1782 Black preached

[1] Richey's *Memoirs of William Black.*

the first Methodist sermon ever heard in Windsor. It was delivered in the house of Mrs. Scott, with "much liberty," and "many were in tears." A week later we find him in Halifax, where he preached "to a stupid set of people." At that time religion and morality in Halifax were both at a low ebb. In 1760 a resident of the town wrote to the Rev. Dr. Stiles of Boston as follows: "The business of one half of the town is to sell rum; the other half to drink it. You may from this simple circumstance judge of our morals, and infer that we are not enthusiasts in religion." Concurrent testimony seems to show that "religion was treated with indifference by the many, with scorn by some, and with reverence by but few."[1] Under such circumstances it is not surprising that Black's preaching awakened opposition, so much so that some "lewd fellows of the baser sort" greatly disturbed the meetings. But noisy demonstrations of this sort soon subsided, and subsequently "the utmost decorum was maintained." The name and fame of William Black had now extended beyond the limits of his early journeys, and earnest requests to visit other places began to reach him. He revisited Horton, Cornwallis, Granville, and preached for the first time at Annapolis, and at each place the word was with power. But the condition of affairs in the Cumberland societies recalled him again to Amherst. During Black's absence Alline had been busy, and "had persuaded nearly seventy members of the Methodist societies to withdraw from them."[2] Consultation was had with some of the faithful ones, classes were reorganised, and new leaders appointed.

[1] Smith's *History*, p. 119. [2] *Ibid.* p. 123.

The extension of the work, and the calls reaching him from new places, impressed the mind of Black with the need of more labourers. In the spring of 1781 he had written to Wesley, giving an account of his conversion and of the work of God so auspiciously begun in his father's household. This letter Wesley transcribed in his Journal under date of 15th April 1782.[1] Toward the close of that year Black wrote a second letter requesting Wesley to send out missionaries to Nova Scotia, to which the latter replied as follows: "Our next Conference will begin in July, and I have great hopes we shall be able to send you assistance. One of our preachers informs me that he is willing to go to any part of Africa or America. He does not regard danger nor toil; neither does he count his life dear unto him, so that he may testify the gospel of the grace of God, and win sinners to Christ. But I cannot advise any person to go alone. Our Lord sent out His disciples two and two, and I do not despair of finding another young man as much devoted to God as he." In the following year the need of additional labourers was emphasised by the coming in of more than twenty thousand British loyalists from the revolted American colonies. On the 19th of October 1781 Lord Cornwallis surrendered his army and artillery to Washington at Yorktown, Virginia. This disaster to the British army virtually settled the question of American independence, creating enthusiastic joy among the revolutionists, and corresponding alarm among the friends of England. For years the latter had found an asylum in New York, but they knew that the defeated party in the struggle could expect scant

[1] Wesley's *Works*, American edition, vol. iv. p. 558.

mercy from the victors, and when, in 1782, an Act was passed by the British Parliament authorising the conclusion of peace with the American colonies, the loyalists foresaw that this would mean speedy banishment for them, and they resolved to anticipate the course of events by seeking refuge elsewhere. Before the summer was quite ended thousands of men, women, and children had gone on board ship and sailed for Nova Scotia, where they were joined later in the season by thousands more. On their arrival the refugees scattered in various directions, some to different parts of Nova Scotia, some to what afterwards became the province of New Brunswick, and some to the shores of Prince Edward Island. Perhaps the most important settlement formed in Nova Scotia at this time was at Point Razoir. Here in the spring and autumn of 1783 about ten thousand loyalists and disbanded troops congregated and began to build a town to which they gave the name of Shelburne. But its early history was one of disaster. Business failures and disappointments followed each other, until ultimately nearly all the original settlers were scattered and scarce one remained to tell the tale.

Among those who came to Shelburne with the loyalist exiles was Robert Barry, who had been connected with the Methodist Society in New York. One month later he was visited by William Black, who, on the following Sabbath morning, "from a table placed among the stumps," preached the first sermon ever delivered in Shelburne. At the afternoon service there was serious disturbance. A commissariat officer with two companions, all under the influence of liquor, threatened the preacher with grievous bodily harm; but the congregation interfered, and the

disturbance ceased. Notwithstanding the opposition of some and the indifference of others, a class was formed, of which Robert Barry became the leader, and he was shortly cheered by the arrival of one or two others whom he had known in New York. In the meantime, Black was pursuing his labours in other directions, extending his journey as far as Prince Edward Island, where, however, he found little encouragement. Returning to the mainland, the winter of 1783–84 was spent at the scene of his earlier labours in Cumberland county; but in the following spring his journeys were resumed. Windsor, Halifax, and Shelburne were visited, and Burchtown, a negro settlement, six miles from Shelburne, afforded the itinerant peculiar satisfaction. "It is indeed wonderful," he writes, "to see what a blessed work the Lord has been carrying on among these poor creatures. Within seven or eight months past sixty of them profess to have found peace with God. And what is further remarkable is that the principal instrument God has employed in this work is a poor negro who can neither walk nor stand. He is usually carried by another man to the place of worship, where he sits and speaks to the people, or kneels and prays with them."

Every day the need of labourers for Nova Scotia was more deeply felt. To supervise effectively so vast a field was far beyond the ability of any one man, and Wesley was again appealed to for assistance. From his reply it appeared he was under the impression that one or two had been sent from the United States, but of this arrangement the Methodists of Nova Scotia knew nothing. About the middle of September Black went to the United States to plead in person for reinforcements. There he met Richard

Whatcoat, and later, Dr. Coke. In the month of December the Christmas Conference assembled, and Black was much impressed with the character of the gathering: "Perhaps such a number of godly men"—about sixty—"never before met in Maryland, perhaps not on the continent of America." Dr. Coke presided; and while he impressed everyone with his greatness of soul and fervent spirit, it is worthy of note that at this Conference he himself received his chief missionary inspiration. Abel Stevens, in his *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, relates that "at the Baltimore Conference Dr. Coke heard the appeal of Black for Nova Scotia. He responded to it with his whole heart, begging money for a mission to that province, ordaining preachers for it, and especially commissioning Garrettson for it." With Garrettson was associated James Oliver Cromwell, who had already had several years' experience in the itinerant ranks. The two sailed from New York in the following February, and after being tossed about by a severe storm for fourteen days landed at Halifax. Black had thus obtained the desire of his heart—he had secured co-labourers for the Nova Scotia field. Tarrying some time to visit friends in Boston, he did not reach home till the following May, but soon set out again to meet Garrettson, whom he found at Falmouth.

Garrettson began his ministry in Halifax; but while he received encouragement and sympathy from some in prominent positions—notably the Rev. Dr. Breynton, rector of St. Paul's, and Governor Parr—he did not escape the enmity of the baser sort. "For two nights we had a little disturbance. One night the stones flew, and one nearly a

pound weight was levelled at me, but missed its aim, and struck out two panes of glass near my head. . . . This is but trifling if I can win souls to Jesus." Toward the end of winter Garrettson made a tour in the country, and in the space of a fortnight travelled three hundred miles through deep snow, and preached twenty times. A second tour took him to Windsor, Cornwallis, Wilmot, Granville, Annapolis, and Digby, the last place, as he remarks, being "entirely destitute of a minister, and I fear of religion too." Nevertheless he formed a society at Digby, during the following summer, of sixty members, nearly all of whom were coloured people.[1] Through the Annapolis valley he came into frequent contact with Alline's followers, "as deluded a people as I ever saw," he remarks. The extent to which the antinomian poison had infected these people may be inferred from the following typical case. "I was conversing," writes Garrettson, "with one who seems to be a principal person among them. She said she believed death would slay more sins for her than ever were destroyed before. 'As for sin,' said she, 'it cannot hurt me; not even adultery, murder, swearing, drunkenness, nor any other sin can break the union between me and Christ.'"

During the summer a month was spent at Liverpool, where the New Light movement seemed to have rent everything in pieces; yet Garrettson found a people "willing to hear the word." During his stay the little Methodist society increased from twenty members to forty. In August and September six weeks were spent at Shelburne and adjoining settlements, which resulted in

[1] Smith's *History*, p. 157.

adding one hundred and fifty persons to the societies. "A work so successful," says Smith,[1] "was not carried on without serious opposition. Sometimes stones were thrown at him (Garrettson), at other times rotten eggs. The preaching-house, hastily constructed, stood on posts on the brow of a hill. One evening when Garrettson was preaching to nearly four hundred persons, a mob endeavoured to remove the posts, intending to push the building down the hill. During the sermon the preacher, ignorant of their intention, quoted in a loud tone, 'Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' Some of the mob, supposing the discovery of their design, gave the alarm, when the whole party ran off with hideous yells, and left the congregation to conclude the service in peace."

During Garrettson's sojourn at Liverpool and Shelburne, Black had been prosecuting the work at Halifax and outlying towns with fidelity and success. In the meantime, John Mann of Shelburne had become an itinerant, and was preaching with tokens of divine approval. Leaving him in temporary charge at Halifax, Black visited Liverpool and Shelburne, and in the following winter (1785–86) returned to his old ground in Cumberland county. At this time Cromwell was stationed at Shelburne, Mann at Liverpool, and Garrettson at Halifax. Black's labours at this period were not followed by the results to which he had been accustomed. The divisions and heart-burnings in the societies were not entirely healed, and this was a serious hindrance to the work. Garrettson's work, though

[1] *History*, p. 160.

not uniformly successful, was more encouraging. If diligence counted for anything, his labours should have been very fruitful. When in Halifax he was accustomed to conduct five preaching-services on the Lord's day. At some of the country places on his extensive field the work prospered. At Windsor he found "a loving society," at Liverpool "a lively society." "Alline's small party," he writes, "oppose us warmly. The greater part of the town attend our ministry, and the first people have joined our society." Arrangements for church building were inaugurated at Windsor, Annapolis, and Cornwallis, and altogether the external circumstances of the Methodist congregations showed great improvement.

At Barrington an unpromising beginning resulted in a successful ending. The place was reached under difficulties, the route along the coast being only a narrow path through miles of lonely forest. Literally through mud and water Garrettson and a travelling companion reached Barrington; but there seemed to be no one to receive them, perhaps for the reason that the people had been warned against the Methodist itinerant, first by a New Light preacher, who represented Garrettson as "legal and destitute of faith," and also by a Calvinist minister, who denounced him as a "dangerous Arminian." There was a meeting-house, however, that had been built by the Congregationalists; and although it had neither doors nor windows, notice was given that a stranger would preach there "an hour before sunset." About twenty people came, listened in silence, and went away; but one woman, touched with compassion, returned and invited the weary travellers to her home. This woman was subsequently converted under Garrettson's

preaching, lived a consistent Christian, and died at the age of ninety-six. On the Sunday the congregation increased to one hundred, but still regarded the preacher with coldness and suspicion. During the week several islands were visited, and on the following Sunday Garrettson returned to Barrington. At first the outlook was darker than ever, for when he reached the meeting-house at the appointed time no one was there to meet him. Like many another discouraged preacher, Garrettson betook himself to prayer. "I retired into a wood," he says, "about a quarter of a mile from the place, and entreated the Lord to send out the people and bless His word. Upon returning to the meeting-house I saw the people assembling from every part of the town, and in a little while we had a large company. The cloud that had oppressed my mind instantly vanished, the Scriptures opened to me, and the word of the Lord reached the hearts of the hearers. Between two or three hundred were awakened in a greater or less degree. After the meeting it appeared that their shyness and their prejudices were all removed, and they came around me on every side, with tears inviting me to their homes." Returning again to Barrington some days later, Garrettson found that the work of the Holy Spirit had been so general that nearly all the families had been influenced. He visited diligently from house to house, and succeeded in forming a society of fifty members, with four leaders and two stewards.

In the spring of 1786 William Black transferred his headquarters to Halifax. Speaking of the religious divisions of the people, he says, "There is one large English church, one small Dutch church, one Presbyterian

meeting-house, one Roman Catholic chapel, besides a small society of Quakers, one of Sandemanians, and one of the followers of Swedenborg, together with a few of Lady Huntingdon's society, and a great swarm of infidels." Methodist preaching had been heard but seldom, and the little society was scattered; but Black succeeded in forming another, and some time subsequently reported "thirty-two in society."

The fewness of the labourers and the largeness of the field, the irregular mode of working, and the fact that New Brunswick, with a population of many thousands, was yet untouched, led to arrangements for a Conference in the autumn of 1786. Dr. Coke expected to be present, but failed to appear, and no explanation of his absence was received.[1] Nevertheless the Conference was held, and six preachers were stationed as follows: Garrettson and Black at Halifax, a circuit extending all the way to Digby; John Mann at Liverpool; Cromwell and James Mann (brother of John) at Shelburne and Barrington; Grandon (a new recruit) at Cumberland. The number of members reported was five hundred and ten.

It had been Wesley's desire that Freeborn Garrettson should be appointed superintendent of the work in the British American provinces and in the West Indies, and in

[1] Subsequently the cause was ascertained. Dr. Coke, with three missionaries (two intended for Newfoundland), embarked at Gravesend, 24th September, but head winds and stormy weather delayed them many days. The voyage was a succession of tempests of unusual violence, and at last the captain, in despair of reaching Halifax, resolved to run for the West Indies. No sooner was the course changed than the weather changed also, until, as Dr. Coke said, "it seemed as if angels blew the gale." On the morning of Christmas Day the battered, leaking ship reached Antigua. The rest of the story is well known.

this wish both Coke and Asbury concurred. At first Garrettson was very averse to the proposal. He seemed to feel that he had a wider commission, and could not think of confining himself to Nova Scotia; but at the Baltimore Conference of 1789 he gave a qualified assent, provided he found, during the next year, that the ministers and people among whom he was expected to labour would give their approval. Much to his surprise, however, when the stations were read he found his name announced as presiding elder of a district in his own country. He was never informed of the reason for this change of policy; and as those were the days when men took the work assigned them, without any thought of choosing for themselves, he asked no questions. This was a matter of great regret alike to Wesley and to the preachers in Nova Scotia, where Garrettson, by his devotion, abundant labours, and success in winning souls, had endeared himself to all. His biographer, the Rev. Nathan Bangs, D.D., tells how this devoted itinerant "travelled mountains and valleys, frequently on foot, with his knapsack at his back; up and down the Indian paths in the wilderness, where it was inexpedient to take a horse; had often to wade through the mud and water of the morasses, and frequently to satisfy his hunger from his knapsack, to quench his thirst from a brook, and to rest his weary limbs on the leaves of trees." Once he nearly lost his life in a snowstorm; at another time, when crossing a river which flows into the Bay of Fundy, he barely escaped a tidal wave which swept over his horse's back as the animal sprang up the river-bank. But not alone for the perils and hardships he endured do we honour the memory of this great and good

man, but for the work he accomplished in extending the Master's kingdom. "It may be fairly questioned," says Dr. Bangs, "whether any one minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, or indeed in any other church, has been instrumental in the awakening and conversion of more sinners than Garrettson."

In 1788 James Wray, an English preacher, was appointed by Wesley to superintend the work in the maritime provinces. At this time not one of the Nova Scotia preachers was ordained, a circumstance which militated somewhat against their usefulness, or at all events their influence, and three of the number—William Black, John Mann, and James Mann—resolved to attend the Conference at Philadelphia to obtain ordination there, which was readily accorded them. Wray attended the same Conference, and after its conclusion the four returned to Nova Scotia and resumed their labours. Wray's administration does not appear to have been very successful, and differences arose between him and two of the brethren. Friendly consultation at a later date restored harmony; but Wray was convinced, it would seem, that he could not bring the irregular methods of the New World under subordination to the rigid military discipline to which he had been accustomed, and he requested Dr. Coke to relieve him from the responsibilities of his office. Coke consented, and William Black was appointed superintendent of the work in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland. For many succeeding years the work continued to be of the same arduous and self-denying character that I have endeavoured to describe; but as the appointment of William Black to the super-

intendency marks the beginning of a new era in the development of Methodism in Eastern British America, so it affords a convenient point at which to break off this brief and imperfect sketch of "pioneer days in the maritime provinces."

III

THE FIRST UNION WITH THE BRITISH CONFERENCE, AND THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO IT

What we have written respecting pioneer days by no means exhausts the theme. Volumes might easily be filled with records of the heroic deeds of those men "of whom the world was not worthy," who in the face of obloquy, persecution, and poverty carried the banner of Methodism all over the North American continent, and vindicated her theology against a world in arms. But enough has been said to show what were the social and religious conditions of the country when Methodism was introduced into the British provinces, and the difficulties which the preachers had to encounter in the prosecution of their work. The story thus far told covers the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth. In 1808 there were two Methodist districts in the Canadas: the Lower Canada District, comprising three circuits—Quebec, Montreal, and Ottawa; and the Upper Canada District, with nine circuits—Cornwall, St. Lawrence, Augusta, Bay of Quinte, Smith's Creek, Yonge Street, Niagara, Ancaster, and Long Point. Besides these there were parts of two circuits in Lower Canada extend-

ing beyond the American boundary: Dunham, connected with the New York Conference; and Standstead, connected with the New England Conference. On the whole ground there were nineteen preachers, including two presiding elders, and a membership of about three thousand. Between the date just referred to and the first union with the British Conference in 1833 there intervenes a period of nearly a quarter of a century. The latter date may be regarded as an epoch year, when a new trend was given to the work of Methodism in the Canadas; but there were some occurrences in the preceding twenty years that call for mention because of their connexion with the subsequent history of the Methodist Church.

The first of these was the disastrous and altogether unnecessary war of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain. For some years preceding public feeling, especially in the Middle and Western States, had become increasingly hostile to England. The ostensible reasons for this resentment were of the flimsiest kind, and as a justification of war were utterly untenable. This was keenly felt by large numbers of intelligent Americans, who endeavoured in all constitutional ways to avert the threatened calamity. The whole Federalist party stood opposed, and its leaders in Congress and out of it did not fail to utter their protest against the war measure as impolitic, unnecessary, and unjust. Nor was this opposition confined to Federalists alone. Not a few Republicans were equally opposed, as the vote in Congress plainly showed. "In the House, Pennsylvania and the States south and west of it gave 62 votes for the war and 32 against it; the States north and east of Pennsylvania gave

17 yeas and 32 nays — in all 79 for and 64 against war."[1] In the Senate the vote was 19 for and 13 against. The alleged grounds of complaint against Great Britain were three in number, or, to speak with strict accuracy, two. In the first place, seamen had deserted from the Royal Navy and were sailing under the American flag: England claimed the right to search for these and take them as deserters, though found on American ships. The exercise of this right was highly irritating to American pride; and as it was sometimes exercised in a very high-handed and dictatorial way, and at times was extended to include the impressment of American seamen, it was no wonder that feeling ran high. Still, it was a matter to be settled by diplomacy and treaty, and not by the stern arbitrament of the sword. The second grievance was the blockade of the ports of France and her allies. Napoleon by his "Berlin Decree," issued on the 1st of November 1806, declared a blockade of the entire British coast, and let loose French privateers against her shipping, and that of all nations trading with her. Great Britain retaliated by "Order in Council," proclaiming a blockade of all French ports, and declared all vessels engaged in traffic with that country, with their cargoes, liable to seizure. At this time much of the world's commerce was carried in American bottoms, and the action of the two European powers was a disastrous blow to American maritime trade, though not so intended. Napoleon sought only to cripple England, and England sought to checkmate Napoleon, and the injury inflicted on American shipping was an incidental result, not the object really aimed at. There was a bitter

[1] C. Schurz, *Life of Henry Clay*, vol. i. chap. v.

outcry in the United States against England's action, and the politicians, except those who opposed the war, found it convenient to ignore the fact that Napoleon's Berlin Decree was responsible for the whole trouble, and that England's action was inevitable under the circumstances.

Strange to say, however, the final blow to American shipping was dealt by the American Government. In the autumn of 1807 a special session of Congress was summoned, and President Jefferson sent a message to the Senate recommending an embargo on all shipping in American ports. An Act to this effect was immediately passed, and the ruin of the American navy was complete. "As the order was carried along the seacoast, every artisan dropped his tools, every merchant closed his doors, every ship was dismantled. American produce—wheat, timber, cotton, tobacco, rice—dropped in value or became unsaleable; every imported article rose in price, wages stopped, swarms of debtors became bankrupt; thousands of sailors hung idle round the wharves, trying to find employment on coasters, and escape to the West Indies or Nova Scotia. A reign of idleness began, and the men who were not already ruined felt that their ruin was only a matter of time."[1] In New England the embargo came like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. As it became apparent that the utter paralysis of trade would be a matter not of months but of years, bitter passions were aroused. It was confidently believed by many that Jefferson had sold himself to France, that his object was to ruin American commerce and strike a deadly blow at England at the same time. The mis-

[1] H. Adams, *History of the United States*, Second Administration of Jefferson, vol. ii. chap. xii.

chievous effects of the embargo measure led to its repeal the following year, and the substitution of a Non-intercourse Bill, which "excluded all public and private vessels of France and England from American waters, forbade under severe penalties the importation of British or French goods . . . and gave the President authority to reopen by proclamation the trade with France or England in case either of those countries should cease to violate neutral rights."[1] Shortly afterward a satisfactory arrangement was reached between the United States Government and Mr. Erskine, the British Minister at Washington, and the Non-intercourse Act was suspended so far as Great Britain was concerned; but it soon transpired that Erskine had acted in utter disregard of the instructions of his Government. He was promptly recalled, and the Non-intercourse Act was restored by proclamation of the President in August 1809. France continued hostile. American ships found lying at Amsterdam were seized, and subsequently, by the decree of Rambouillet, every American ship found in any French port was confiscated and ordered to be sold. This high-handed proceeding, by alienating the sympathy of the United States, seemed to open the way for more friendly relations between the latter power and Great Britain. Napoleon was not slow to perceive this, and in the following year (August 1810) he suddenly changed the whole situation by revoking the decrees of Berlin and Milan, "such revocation to take place on the first day of the following November, provided the British Government revoked their Orders in Council, or (and this was the important provision) the United States caused

[1] H. Adams, *History of the United States*, vol. ii. p. 445.

their rights to be respected."[1] Such an announcement, which committed Napoleon to nothing, carried duplicity upon its very face; but the American Government was so completely deceived by the crafty appeal to the national vanity that commercial intercourse with England, which had been resumed the preceding May, was again suspended; and this was supposed to be "causing American rights to be respected."

At the election of 1808 Jefferson was succeeded by Madison in the presidential chair, and it was under Madison's administration that events drifted rapidly toward a conflict with England. It is doubtful if Madison himself really desired war; but a number of hot-headed young Republicans had recently come to the front, and Madison was swept along in the tide of a new national spirit and expectation. These fiery spirits were convinced that the only way to maintain the dignity of the Republic and make the nation respected was to fight somebody, and they preferred to fight the English, whom they cordially hated, rather than the French, for whom they had a kindly regard, although beyond all question the French under Napoleon had been the worst transgressors. Besides this, a spirit of cupidity had been aroused. Canada lay conveniently near, and was almost entirely defenceless.[2] True, it had not been a factor in the grievances of which the American Government complained; but to capture it

[1] G. L. Rives, *Selections from the Correspondence of Thomas Barclay*, chap. vi.

[2] The *New York Tribune*, in 1861, made the following remarkable admission respecting the war of 1812: "That war, as everybody knows, was pre-eminently a Southern measure, of which the great object and leading end and aim, by which it was alone justified as an expedient undertaking, was the conquest and annexation of Canada."

would extend enormously the jurisdiction of the United States, inflict a wound upon a nation of which the American politicians were extremely jealous, and above all would bring great renown to the administration under which all this had been accomplished. Moreover, it looked like a very safe undertaking. The white population of the United States amounted to nearly six millions, that of Canada to three hundred thousand. There was a frontier of a thousand miles to be defended, and England, hampered and weakened by her long continental wars, could not be expected to render much assistance. Besides, England was far away, and in those days of sailing ships it took a long time to transport troops and stores across a thousand leagues of sea. Then why not make an immediate descent on Canada? It may be captured before England can strike a blow. Yes, it looked easy; but there was one factor in the problem with which the American politicians forgot to reckon, namely, the Canadian people. They were under a delusion from which many Americans have not escaped to this day, that Canadians were longing for an opportunity to throw off the British yoke and find freedom under the Stars and Stripes; and it required three years of disastrous war, with many reverses and ultimate defeat, to convince them that they were mistaken. The Republic that began the war without just cause, continued it with few and indecisive victories, and was compelled to retire in the end shorn of much of its prestige, and, but for the (perhaps unwise) magnanimity of Great Britain, denuded of much of its territory. The verdict of history justifies, to some extent at least, the revolt of the American colonies in 1776, but has

scarcely a word of apology to offer for the cruel war of 1812.[1]

It was impossible that a conflict of such duration and bitterness could be waged between the two countries without affecting the work of the Methodist Church, especially in Canada. With the exception of two circuits in Lower Canada, close to the American border, the whole of the Canadian work was connected with the Genesee Conference. On the 23rd of July 1812, about a month after the declaration of war, this Conference met not far from the Niagara frontier. None of the Canadian preachers was in attendance; but the bishop, with sublime faith in God, calmly proceeded to arrange the work and station the preachers as if no conflict was at hand. Preachers of British or Canadian birth were allowed to remain in Canada, and only two or three Americans were appointed, among whom was Nathan Bangs. He relinquished his charge, however (Montreal), with the consent of the bishop, and another—Josiah F. Chamberlain—did not go to his field. It was just as well, for when news of the declaration of war arrived at Quebec, the Government issued a proclamation commanding all American citizens to leave the province by the 3rd of July. As in 1812, none of the Canadian preachers attended the Genesee Conference of 1813, but in each year of the war they met together and made their own arrangements for the work.

[1] In the American Congress on the 2nd of January 1813 Mr. Quincy denounced the war in no measured terms. "We seized," he exclaimed, "the first opportunity to carry the war among the harmless colonists. It was not owing to our Government that the bones of the Canadians were not mixed with the ashes of their habitations. Since the invasion of the buccaneers there is nothing in history more disgraceful than this war."

This year no appointments were made by the bishop. Although the war had not yet touched Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, or the St. Francis River, yet these circuits are vacant; but in Upper Canada the preachers seem to have remained at their posts, caring for their disturbed and scattered flocks, although some of the circuits had been scenes of strife and bloodshed. During this and the following year many of the preachers located, and their names disappear from the Minutes. In fact, only seven remained in active service during the entire period of the war—four in the Niagara country and three on the Bay of Quinte and the St. Lawrence River.

During the interregnum caused by the war, some correspondence took place between members of the Methodist society in Montreal and the authorities of the British Wesleyan Missionary Committee, requesting and recommending the appointment of missionaries to Lower Canada. The request met with a favourable response, and in 1814 John Strong was sent to Quebec and Samuel Leigh to Montreal. Not only was this done without communication with the American bishops, which was perhaps impracticable during the war, but it was done at the request of certain individuals in Montreal, and not of the society as a whole; and in this lay the germs of future trouble. At the close of the war in 1815, the Genesee Conference resumed its control of the work in Canada; but, recognising the difficulties of the situation, the bishop exercised unusual care in the selection of men, so that no offence might be given to a people whose feelings had been rendered very sensitive by the three years' struggle. Quebec and Montreal were left to be supplied,

but the British Conference appointed Richard Williams to the former place and John Strong to the latter. When Strong reached Montreal, he desired to use the chapel already erected, but was opposed by Henry Ryan, the presiding elder of the Lower Canada district. Ryan belonged to the Church militant—he was a natural fighter; but in this instance he simply discharged a duty which devolved upon him as the official representative of the Church under whose labours the Montreal society had been gathered and the chapel erected. But as once it happened at Iconium, where "the multitude of the city was divided, and part held with the Jews and part with the apostles," so now it happened in Montreal—the society "was divided, and part held with" Mr. Strong "and part with" Elder Ryan. The latter wrote to Bishop Asbury, rehearsing the facts; and the bishop, in turn, wrote to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee in London. The committee replied at length, the part of the letter referring to the Montreal difficulty being as follows:

"To preserve the mutual good understanding, and the unity of the spirit, and as far as possible a co-operation in promoting the good work of the Lord, we feel it our duty to state to you a subject of local difference which to us has been painful, and which we feel a delicacy in stating, but to which we are compelled from the necessities of the case, that the work of the Lord be not hindered. In consequence of applications being made to the British Conference from the society of Montreal, a missionary was sent to that place, and received as a messenger of the gospel of peace; but we are sorry to learn that some misunderstanding has taken place between Brothers Strong and

Williams, our missionaries, and Brother Ryan, your presiding elder for Lower Canada. From the former we have received a statement of their proceedings, and from the latter a letter of complaint. We have also received a letter from Brother Bennett, the chairman of the Nova Scotia district, who has visited Montreal, etc., and reported to us his proceedings. Upon a review of the whole, and from the most serious and deliberate consideration, we are led to conclude that, considering the relative situation of the inhabitants of Montreal and of Canada to this country, and particularly as the principal part of the people appear to be in favour of our missionaries, it would be for peace and comfort, and the furtherance of the gospel, for our brethren to occupy those stations, especially the former; and to which we conceive we have a claim, as a considerable part of the money for building the chapel and house was raised in this country. We trust our American brethren will see the propriety of complying with our wishes with respect to those places, not to mention their political relation to this country, which, however, is not of little importance, for we are conscious that their general habits and prejudices are in favour of English preachers, being more congenial to their views and feelings, which should certainly be consulted, and will tend to facilitate the success of the gospel and their spiritual prosperity. As your and our object is mutually to diffuse the knowledge of Him whose kingdom is not of this world, and by every possible means to promote the immortal interests of men, let us not contend—we have one Master, even Christ—but give place to each other, that the word of the Lord may have free course, run, and be glorified. We cannot

but hope that, from the contiguity of the labours of the brethren belonging to the Conferences, the spirit of unity and love will be promoted, and by this measure a more perfect reciprocal intercourse established. As you have kindly invited our esteemed brethren, Messrs. Black and Bennett, to take a seat in your Conference, we have directed them to pay you a visit at Baltimore for this purpose, and to amicably arrange and settle this business, whom we trust you will receive as our representatives and as brethren."

When the General Conference assembled in Baltimore in the month of May 1816, the recent death of Bishop Asbury cast a shadow over its sessions. Bishop M'Kendree presided; Messrs. Black and Bennett were present to represent the British Conference, and William Case and Henry Ryan were there as delegates from the Genesee Conference; hence there was no danger that Canadian affairs would be overlooked. Statements were presented, the letter to Bishop Asbury was read, and the whole subject referred to a committee. At a subsequent stage the committee presented a report in which they recognise "an earnest desire to have all existing difficulties terminated"; deprecate the unhappy dissensions in Montreal; claim that the circuits in Canada had been supplied during the war as regularly as circumstances would permit; also "that it is the desire of the great majority of the people in Upper and Lower Canada to be supplied as heretofore with preachers from the United States"; and concluded by submitting the following resolutions, which were adopted by the Conference:

"1. That we cannot, consistently with our duty to

the societies of our charge in the Canadas, give up any part of them, or any of our chapels in those provinces, to the superintendence of the British Connexion.

" 2. That a respectful letter be addressed to the London Methodist Missionary Society, explaining the reasons for the above resolution."

The letter was written, but no good came of it, and the unhappy divisions continued. Instead of withdrawing their missionaries, the Wesleyan Missionary Committee increased them, and even sent some into Upper Canada. There can be no doubt that some of the people—immigrants from Great Britain chiefly—desired English preachers; but there is reason to believe that the bulk of the Methodist congregations were quite content with the ministrations to which they had been accustomed, and desired no change. The argument that Canada was a British colony and should have British preachers was not without weight, but was scarcely sufficient to justify the establishment of rival congregations under the Methodist name.

In 1817 the Upper Canada House of Assembly proposed to consider grievances connected with lands reserved for the Crown and the Clergy. In laying out a township of about twelve miles square for settlement, it was first divided into concessions, and these into lots of two hundred acres each; but in each township seven lots were reserved for the Crown and seven for the Clergy, or two sevenths of the entire area. From a purely business point of view this was a grievance, for these reserved lands paid no taxes, bore no part of the public burdens, although their value was steadily advanced by the improvements made by adjacent settlers. Moreover, so much uncleared and un-

cultivated land in a township was a hindrance to local improvements, such as roads and other conveniences, and some began to agitate for a change. But above and beyond all this, many were conscientiously opposed to the endowment of any religious denomination out of the public domain, and began to affirm their convictions with some degree of boldness. When it became apparent that the House of Assembly was disposed to deal with this question, the Governor, whose irresponsible Council was entirely opposed to an investigation, cut short the proceedings by proroguing the House. This was the beginning of the Clergy Reserves agitation within the walls of the Provincial Parliament, and it continued to be one of the absorbing questions in the country's politics for many years.

In the same year the first Methodist Conference ever held in Canada assembled in a chapel in the township of Elizabethtown on the Augusta circuit. It is memorable chiefly as marking the beginning of the most extensive revival of religion that had ever occurred in the country, and it may be questioned if it has ever been exceeded to this day. It is believed that during the sessions of the Conference more than one hundred persons were awakened, of whom the greater part found peace in believing. The revival extended to all parts of the Augusta circuit, and then through the fields westward. In fourteen months more than three hundred persons in the Bay of Quinte region professed conversion, many of whom were heads of families. From the Bay of Quinte the work spread to Niagara, where about four hundred were converted in one year. The total ingathering from the revival which began at the Elizabethtown Conference was about fourteen

hundred. There would be nothing remarkable about all this in some crowded centre of population where people could be reached in large masses, but in a population as sparse as that of Canada at the time the results were really wonderful. In this respect that first Conference in Canada stands without a parallel, as far as I know, among Methodist Conferences throughout the world.

It would be pleasant to record that the revival put an end to divisions and estrangements in the Methodist societies, but this was not the case. In the year of which we speak, nine English preachers were stationed in the two provinces, of whom five were in Upper Canada. There might be some grounds for the action of the Wesleyan Conference in such places as Quebec, St. Armands, and Melbourne, since these places were not supplied by the Genesee Conference; but these grounds did not exist in places like Montreal, Augusta, Kingston, Bay of Quinte, and York. There can be no doubt that the authorities in England acted in perfect good faith; but they were misled by the partial and one-sided statements of persons in Canada who, while speaking for themselves, were assumed to be speaking for the bulk of the Methodist people. The contentions arising from the presence of two Methodist bodies on the same ground were much deplored, and led Bishops M'Kendree and George to remonstrate with the British Missionary Committee, and to lay before them a full statement respecting the situation in Canada. The reply of the Secretaries—Rev. Jabez Bunting, Richard Watson, and Joseph Taylor—indicated clearly their desire to promote the most amicable relations between their missionaries and the Canadian preachers; but circum-

stances seemed to render this impossible. The Canadian preachers claimed that the country belonged, Methodistically, to those who first supplied the religious needs of the people, and were still able to do so; and they were disposed to regard the English missionaries as so many Jacobs, or supplanters, who had come to take away, or at least to divide, the inheritance. The divisions continued, and the irenical resolutions of the Wesleyan Missionary Committee seemed like water spilt upon the ground.

The General Conference which met in Baltimore in the month of May 1820 gave careful consideration to the condition of affairs in Canada. Numerous petitions and memorials were received from the Canadian societies, protesting against the interference of the English preachers, and praying for a continuance of ministerial service from the United States. The letter from the secretaries of the British Missionary Committee was also read, after which it was "Resolved, . . . that it is the duty of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church to continue their episcopal charge over our societies in the Canadas, all except Quebec." At a subsequent stage this resolution was so far modified as to authorise the delegate who might be sent to England to consent to the transfer of the whole of the Lower Canada district to the jurisdiction of the British Wesleyan Conference. Another resolution authorised the episcopate, with the consent of the Genesee Conference, to establish an Annual Conference in Canada, should they deem such a step expedient. The Rev. John Emory was chosen delegate to England. He was cordially received by the English brethren, and the

address of the General Conference, as well as Mr. Emory's representations of what he regarded as the true state of affairs in Canada, received careful consideration, and elicited a most friendly response. After reciprocating the kindly sentiments of the American brethren, providing for the appointment of a fraternal delegate to the next General Conference, an exchange of books, periodicals, etc., the Wesleyan Conference adopted the following:

"1. That as the American Methodists and ourselves are but one body, it would be inconsistent with our unity, and dangerous to that affection which ought to characterise us in every place, to have different societies and congregations in the same towns and villages, or to allow of any intrusion on either side into each other's labours.

"2. That this principle shall be the rule by which the disputes now existing in the Canadas between our missionaries and the American preachers shall be terminated.

"3. That the simplest and most effectual manner of carrying this rule into effect appears to us to be to accede to the suggestion of the American Conference, that the American brethren shall have the occupation of Upper Canada, and the British missionaries that of Lower Canada, allowing sufficient time for carrying this arrangement into effect, with all possible tenderness to existing prejudices and conflicting interests on both sides."

Thus the dispute which had continued for years was happily terminated, peace and goodwill were restored, and the preachers of the two Connexions pursued their work in separate provinces without interfering with each other's fields. When brethren cannot "dwell *together* in unity,"

it is better to dwell *apart*; and there seems to have been enough human nature in both the American and English preachers to render this course desirable.

Previous to the General Conference of 1824, the question of admitting laymen to the Annual and General Conferences had been the subject of a good deal of discussion; so much so that the Conferences seem to have elected their delegates largely on that issue. The Genesee Conference, with which the two districts in Upper Canada were connected, was generally favourable to the change; for instead of sending the presiding elders to the General Conference, as was the usual practice, on this occasion they were passed by. This gave great offence to Henry Ryan, the presiding elder of the Bay of Quinte district, and he immediately began an agitation all over his district by violent appeals against the "reformers," as they were termed. Although Ryan was never a favourite among the preachers he was very popular among the people, and his appeals to the latter to seek a separation from the jurisdiction of the Church in the United States made some impression. He was joined in the crusade by a local preacher named Breakenridge, and together they called conventions and harangued the people. These conventions delegated Ryan and Breakenridge to attend the General Conference and effect a separation; but when they presented themselves at Baltimore they were refused a seat, which gave further offence to the Canadian elder. Under the then existing law, Breakenridge, being a layman, could not be admitted, and neither could Ryan unless duly elected by his Conference. Both of them must have been aware of this, and their attempt to override the discipline did

not have a good effect. Moreover, the Conference was not slow to perceive Ryan's inconsistency; although he had violently opposed lay delegation, he was now endeavouring to secure a place for a lay delegate in the General Conference. The question of lay delegation, and all the petitions and memorials relating thereto, was referred to a committee, which after full discussion adopted a report to the effect that the proposed change was inexpedient; and the report was confirmed by the Conference. The further question of the formation of an independent Methodist Church for Canada, with a resident bishop, was next taken up, and the two delegates from that country, though not favourable personally to the proposed change, advocated some concessions for the sake of peace. It was finally decided that there should be a separate Conference in Upper Canada but under the superintendency of the American bishops.

When Ryan and Breakenridge returned from Baltimore, the agitation for entire separation was resumed. A large meeting was held in the Elizabethtown chapel, and it was resolved that as the General Conference had not allowed the independence of the Canadian body, they would break off from the American Church without permission. A constitution and rules were adopted, also a letter to the Canadian societies. This high-handed proceeding was received with general favour on the Bay of Quinte district, and efforts were at once made to extend the agitation to the district farther west. Ryan, with characteristic energy, threw himself into the struggle, and during the summer of 1824 the societies were much disturbed. Tidings of the state of affairs having reached the bishops, steps were at once taken to allay the agitation. Bishop George, who

was known and beloved in Canada, and whose instrumentality in promoting the great revival was still gratefully remembered, came into the country and passed through the circuits of the Bay of Quinte district, preaching to the congregations, explaining the true state of affairs, and assuring them that if they really desired separation the next General Conference would doubtless grant it. Elijah Hedding, one of the new bishops, accompanied by Nathan Bangs, entered the country by way of Niagara, and travelled slowly through the principal circuits, preaching, exhorting, and advising the people, until they reached Hallowell (now Picton), where the Annual Conference was to meet. The efforts of the two bishops and Nathan Bangs had a most salutary effect, and by the time the Conference met the agitation had subsided, and affairs had resumed their normal calm.

The first Conference of the Canadian preachers met in the village of Hallowell, 25th August 1824. Bishops George and Hedding presided, and William Case, who had entered the itinerant ranks nineteen years before, was chosen Secretary. Thirty preachers composed the entire Conference. Peace and harmony reigned during the session, but it was evident there existed a general desire that Methodism in Upper Canada should become an independent body not later than the General Conference of 1828. To prepare the way, a memorial to the several Annual Conferences was adopted, setting forth the reasons for the proposed change. It was pointed out (1) That the prejudices of the early settlers, who had been compelled to leave their homes in the American colonies at the time of the revolutionary war, because of their devotion

to the British Government, had been revived and intensified by the unjust war of 1812, but that these prejudices would subside if the preachers became permanent residents of the country. (2) That the difficulties in the way of episcopal supervision were so great as to be almost insurmountable, resulting in many inconveniences to the Canadian societies. (3) That jealousies had been awakened in political circles because a number of the Methodist ministers in Upper Canada were from the United States, and the circumstance was used to the detriment of the Canadian Church. (4) That in the event of another war between the two countries, the difficulties of intercourse would make it impracticable for the bishops to discharge their duties in Canada. (5) That under present circumstances Methodist preachers were not permitted to solemnise matrimony, nor could titles to chapel property be secured.

The formation of an Annual Conference in Canada caused only slight changes in the *personnel* of the ministry. One preacher located and two remained with the Genesee Conference; but six new men were received as probationers for the ministry, and three others were taken out under the presiding elders. At this Conference Henry Ryan was relieved of official responsibility, and Thomas Madden was appointed to succeed him. This was inevitable. Ryan had plainly violated the rules of the Church by "sowing dissention in the societies," and to retain him in office would be to put a premium on disloyalty. But he was not dealt with harshly. A new mission was created called "Chippawa and Grand River Falls, and new settlements near"; and as Ryan owned a farm and other property at

the first-named place, the arrangement was a convenient one for himself and his family. Still, to be "reduced to the ranks," so to speak, was irritating to a man of his temperament; and although at the Conference he seemed to be satisfied with the decision reached in regard to separation from the Church in the United States, dissatisfaction soon returned and influenced his future conduct. In the following year, 1825, he was superannuated.

At the same Conference the educational status of the younger ministers came under review, and the "presiding elder and others of our senior brethren" were "requested to pay special attention to this matter, taking the oversight thereof, and affording to our young men all the aid in their power for the attainment of the object." It is true the young men had not been left entirely without a course of study. In order to be received into full connexion it was indispensably necessary to be well acquainted with Wesley's *Sermons*, Fletcher's *Checks*, Clarke's and Benson's *Commentaries*, Watts' *Logic*, Mosheim's and Milner's Church Histories, Murray's *English Grammar*, and Morse's *Geography*. But now they were recommended to study in addition such books as the following: Wesley's *Natural Philosophy*, Goldsmith's Histories of Greece, Rome, and England; Rollin's *Ancient History*; Prideaux and Shuckford's *Connections of the Old and New Testaments*; Clarke's Chronological Tables; British Nepos; Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Young's *Night Thoughts*; Cowper's Poems; and biographies of Wesley, Fletcher, Coke, Bramwell, and Francis Xavier. Taken in connexion with the "Conference course," this was not a bad regimen on which to rear

devout and aggressive evangelists, and to promote acquaintance with such literature as was available at the time. That such a course should be mapped out for young men who were almost constantly in the saddle, and who, in addition to pastoral work, had to preach from twenty to thirty times in the month, indicated unbounded confidence in their zeal and devotion, and gave assurance that they were giving good heed to Wesley's counsel: "Never be unemployed; never be triflingly employed."

As the General Conference was to assemble in May 1828, the Canadian Conference of the preceding year chose its allotted number of delegates. They were instructed to present the memorial drawn up in 1824, and to use all proper means to secure independence for the Canadian Conference. The arguments in favour of separation in 1824 were increasingly cogent in 1828. Everywhere the Methodists were maligned for being subject to the jurisdiction of the American bishops, and their loyalty was constantly called in question, so that the position of the preachers was becoming altogether unbearable. To add to the tension, Henry Ryan, though a superannuated preacher, resumed his former agitation. He knew that the Canada Conference desired independence, that the Methodist people in general were favourable to that policy, and that it would doubtless be granted at the approaching General Conference; but he professed to believe that it would not be granted, and so continued his agitation. As the Conference would not follow his lead, he determined to separate from the Methodist Episcopal Church, with as many as could be persuaded to join him, and form a new connexion under a new name. It is usually the case that when men

inaugurate separations in the Church they attempt to justify their action by bitter attacks upon those from whom they separate; and so it was with Henry Ryan. He assailed the preachers as ambitious, proud, foppish, covetous, and persecuting; the members and all who adhered to the Conference as dupes and slaves; while all that the bishops were doing for the independence of the Church was merely hypocrisy and pretence, as they had no desire to lessen their own power and jurisdiction. One of the preachers, David Breakenridge junior, son of the local preacher who took part in the first agitation, sided with Ryan now; but all the rest stood firm, while of the members less than two hundred could be persuaded to secede. It was very significant that Ryan's strongest supporters were found among the haters and foes of Methodism. Wordy "loyalists," government officials, even the Speaker of the House of Assembly gave his encouragement; while the Rev. Dr. Strachan, first bishop of Toronto, and a life member of the Legislative Council, rendered still more substantial aid by sending Ryan fifty pounds.[1] Napoleon's favourite motto in warfare was, "Divide and conquer"; the foes of Methodism were now pursuing the same tactics, and, it is to be feared, with the same object in view. Ryan and Breakenridge with their followers, having cut loose from the Church, proceeded to form a new organisation under the name of the "Canadian Wesleyan Church."

The General Conference of 1828 convened in the city of Pittsburg, the first time that body had assembled west of the Alleghanies. Five bishops were present and delegates

[1] Playter's *History*, pp. 297–99.

from sixteen Annual Conferences, including five from Canada. The request of the preachers and people in Canada for a separation from the jurisdiction of the Church in the United States was one of the chief subjects of discussion, and occupied considerable time. It was first considered in a committee, which reported, in the first instance, that the Conference had no constitutional right to set off the brethren in Upper Canada as an independent body. Their duty was to preserve the integrity of the Church, not to break it up into fragments; hence to grant the prayer of the memorial would set a precedent of a dangerous character, and would contravene the very purpose for which they were constituted a delegated Conference. This view, which was generally accepted, threatened to block further proceedings, until John Emory (afterward bishop) suggested "that the preachers who went to Canada from the United States went in the first instance as missionaries, and that ever afterward, whenever additional help was needed, Bishop Asbury and his successors asked for volunteers, not claiming the right to send them in the same authoritative manner in which they were sent to the different parts of the United States and the territories; hence it followed that the compact between us and our brethren in Canada was altogether of a voluntary character —we had offered them our services, and they had accepted them—and therefore, as the time had arrived when they were no longer willing to receive or accept of our labours and superintendence, they had a perfect right to request us to withdraw our services, and we the same right to withhold them."[1] This was regarded as both clear and

[1] Bangs' *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. iii. p. 391.

convincing, and it was on this understanding that the consent of the Conference was obtained. The answer of the General Conference to the request from Canada was couched in the following terms:

"Resolved by the delegates of the Annual Conference, in General Conference assembled—

"That whereas the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America has heretofore been extended over the ministers and members in connexion with the said Church in the province of Upper Canada, by mutual agreement, and by consent of our brethren in that province; and whereas this General Conference is satisfactorily assured that our brethren in the said province, under peculiar and pressing circumstances, do now desire to organise themselves into a distinct Methodist Episcopal Church, in friendly relation with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States—

"Therefore be it resolved, and it is hereby resolved, by the delegates of the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled:

"If the Annual Conference in Upper Canada in its ensuing session, or any succeeding session previous to the next General Conference, shall definitely determine on this course, and elect a general superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in that province, this General Conference do hereby authorise any one or more of the general superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, with the assistance of any two or more elders, to ordain such general superintendent for the said Church in Upper Canada:

"Provided always, that nothing herein contained is

contrary to, or inconsistent with, the laws existing in the said province; and provided that no such general superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Upper Canada, or any of his successors in office, shall at any time exercise any ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatever in any part of the United States, or of the territories thereof; and provided also that this article shall be expressly ratified and agreed to by the said Canada Annual Conference before any such ordination shall take place."

Thus the separation of Methodism in Canada from the jurisdiction of the Church in the United States was sanctioned, or at least permitted. To some it must have been a painful moment. The work in Canada began and continued under the labours of preachers from the United States. Its development under the fostering care of the American Church had been watched with the keenest interest, and the prospect of separation must have caused feelings of deep regret. But believing such action to be in the order of divine providence, the General Conference yielded up its oversight in a calm and dignified manner, "and in a spirit becoming bishops and elders in the Church of God." This was a great surprise to Mr. Ryan and his friends. When the delegates returned from the General Conference, Ryan was informed of the action that had taken place. It was afterward reported that "he looked astonished, trembled, and could scarcely utter a word." It is believed that he would have retraced his steps but for the influence of the Government and the party supporting him. But perhaps he felt that he had gone too far to recede, although the ground on which he had based his action had been taken completely from under his feet.

The General Conference having relinquished its jurisdiction over the Conference in Canada, it became necessary for the latter body to adopt measures for its own government and that of the societies under its care. Accordingly, when, in October of the same year, the Conference assembled in Switzer's chapel in the township of Ernestown, under the presidency of Bishop Hedding, this subject engaged attention during the greater part of the session. The first step was to organise into a distinct and independent church, taking the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada. This being done, Bishop Hedding announced to the Conference that he had now no further jurisdiction over them, and that it would be necessary, before proceeding further, to appoint a presiding officer. The Conference immediately requested Bishop Hedding to act in that capacity, which he consented to do, and accordingly presided over the deliberations till the close of the session. It was resolved to adopt the discipline hitherto in use, with such changes and additions as local circumstances might require. Provision was also made for a General Conference, to be composed of all travelling elders who had travelled the four years immediately preceding, and been received into full connexion. As the Conference had decided to adopt the Episcopal form of government, it became necessary to elect a bishop. Overtures had been made to the Rev. Nathan Bangs and the Rev. Wilbor Fisk, but they both declined the appointment. It was determined, therefore, to elect a general superintendent, *pro tempore*, and the Rev. William Case was unanimously chosen to that office. The Conference also appointed a committee of three to correspond with the

British Wesleyan Conference, with a view of establishing friendly relations with that body.

In the transactions of this Conference three facts deserve especial notice: (1) An entire separation from the jurisdiction of the Church in the United States had taken place. (2) A new name had been adopted. (3) Extensive alterations had been made in the discipline. And yet no one thought, even for a moment, that the identity of the Church had been impaired, much less destroyed, or that the Conference had exceeded the powers which, by the very constitution of Methodism, it possessed. If proof upon this point were needed, it might be found in the words of Bishop Hedding at the Conference of 1830. He had come to visit the Conference, and was requested to preside at the Sunday services, and ordain the preachers who had been received into full connexion. At the administration of the Lord's Supper he remarked, "It had frequently been said that the Wesleyan Methodists were one in every part of the world. By the Wesleyan Methodists, he understood, first, the Mother Church, or Wesleyan Connexion in Europe; secondly, the elder sister in the United States, called the Methodist Episcopal Church in America; thirdly, the younger sister in this country, distinguished by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada. These bodies, though they are perfectly independent of each other in all their ecclesiastical relations, are one in all the prominent features of their discipline, perfectly one in doctrine, one in name, one in spirit, and one in aim; they are indeed one great family." Thus the changes that had been made, being perfectly constitutional, had not impaired

the identity of the Church, and the chain of Methodistic unity continued unbroken.

We have thus traced the progress of Methodism in Canada down to the time when it became a distinct and independent Church. It now remains to state the causes which led that Church to unite itself in filial bonds with the parent body of England. It will be remembered that, in 1820, the American and British Conferences had agreed to divide their jurisdiction in the Canadas, the latter body confining its labours to the lower, and the former to the upper province. But when, in 1828, the societies in Upper Canada became a separate and independent Church, the British Conference considered the former agreement as no longer binding, and that they were at liberty to send their missionaries into any part of the province where their services might be desired by the people. In accordance with this view, the British Committee decided upon an immediate increase of their labourers in the Canadas. It was doubted by many whether the view referred to could be justified. A bargain is a bargain, and all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities descend to "heirs, executors, and assigns" with undiminished force, unless the terms of the compact contain a proviso that under certain conditions the agreement shall lapse. Some of the reasons assigned by the British secretaries were not without weight. It was affirmed that within a few years a large number of Methodist emigrants from Great Britain had settled in Upper Canada, and these had strongly urged the British Committee to send missionaries among them. Moreover, the Canada Conference was entirely unable to meet the

spiritual wants of the people. The population of the province at this time was about 175,000, while the number of Methodist preachers was only 43; and the Missionary Society in Canada, yet in its infancy, was able to afford but little aid. But supposing all this to be true, brotherly courtesy, if nothing more, demanded that the Canada Conference be consulted before the compact was broken; and this was not done.

The action of the British Missionary Committee was regarded by many in Canada with grave apprehension. They foresaw that collisions would inevitably occur between the Canadian preachers and the English missionaries, and the respective societies under their care, which would result in heart-burning and estrangements among brethren, while it would put a reproach into the mouths of enemies and rob the Church of her hereditary boast, "The Methodists are one all over the world." Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the question arose in many thoughtful and pious minds, "Would it not be for the interests of religion and of Methodism in these provinces if a union were effected between the two bodies? We are one in faith and one in usage, while the differences between our respective forms of government are not of a character that need keep us still apart." This question soon became an engrossing topic in Methodist circles. It was informally discussed at official meetings, as well as among the people at large; and although many were of opinion that the action of the missionary authorities in England had been hasty and inconsiderate, it was better to sacrifice something than allow rival altars to be established.

Although the Conference of 1828 had appointed a committee to correspond with the British Conference, nothing was done till 1831, when the action taken by the British Missionary Committee induced the Rev. Egerton Ryerson to address a letter to the principal Secretary, the Rev. Richard Watson, giving a full statement of the case as it then stood, and also of the views of the Canadian preachers in reference to the matter. In the following year the committee sent out the Rev. Robert Alder as their agent and representative, and with him communications to the Mission Board of the Canada Conference at York (Toronto). Mr. Alder delivered the communications and stated the object of his mission, which was to prepare the way for the appointment of a number of British Wesleyan missionaries among the British emigrants in various parts of the province. The board admitted that it was unable to supply the religious needs of the population, but informed Mr. Alder, and also the British Committee, of the evils likely to arise from the establishment of two bodies of Methodists in the province, and suggested the propriety of uniting the means and energies of the two Connexions for the evangelization of the Indian tribes and the new settlers of the country. The board also invited Mr. Alder to attend the session of Conference to be held in about six weeks from that time.

Some account of these preliminary steps having been published in the *Christian Guardian*, interest in the question was increased throughout the whole Connexion; consequently, when the Conference assembled at Hallowell on the 8th of August, all the preachers who had been

received into full connexion (except one or two detained by sickness) were in attendance. A number of leading laymen also had come to the seat of Conference, attracted by a desire to hear the discussions; and such was the anxiety of the Conference that all things should be done openly, and that the members of the Church should be fully informed of all points in the scheme, that the laymen were freely admitted into the chapel where the Conference was held (which was contrary to the usual practice) during the whole time in which the question of union was under discussion. On the first day of the session the President of the Missionary Board laid before the Conference the correspondence which had taken place between the Board and the British Missionary Committee. It was read and referred to a committee of nine, chosen by ballot. After a consideration which continued till the fourth day, the committee presented a report in the form of a preamble and resolutions, recommending a union, on certain terms, with the British Conference. The Conference took up the report, and after a full discussion of all the points involved, the resolutions were adopted by a very large majority. There was one resolution which, as it involved the relinquishing of Episcopacy, required the sanction of the General Conference before it could become law. The president was requested, therefore, to call a special session of the General Conference, which he did, naming six o'clock of the following Monday morning as the time of meeting.[1]

[1] This was quite regular, because the discipline of the Church provided that the General Superintendent might call a meeting of the General Conference at any time at the request of the Annual Conference.

It may be necessary here to explain the difference between the Annual and the General Conference. The Annual Conference was composed of all travelling preachers who had travelled two years, and had been received into full connexion; the General Conference was composed of all travelling preachers who had travelled four years, and been ordained elders. There were present, however, at the Hallowell Conference no less than seventeen travelling preachers who had been received into full connexion and elected to elder's orders, but not ordained, because there was no bishop to ordain them, and the discipline, at that time, did not admit of ordination in any other way. It was felt to be a manifest injustice that these brethren should be excluded from the General Conference on the sole ground that the ceremony of ordination had not been performed; hence, when the General Conference assembled on Monday morning, its first act was to pass the following: "Resolved, that the first answer to the second question of the third section of the discipline be expunged, and the following inserted in its place: 'The General Conference shall be composed of all the elders and elders-elect who are members of the Annual Conference.'" The admission of the seventeen elders-elect on this occasion did not alter the final vote, for one of the number was absent through sickness, and of the remaining sixteen, eight were known to be opposed to the contemplated union. The resolution to supersede Episcopacy by an Annual Presidency was then taken up, and adopted by a majority of more than three fourths. After which the Conference adjourned.

The Annual Conference then reassembled, and appointed the Rev. Egerton Ryerson as its representative,

with instructions to proceed to England and confer with the British Conference on the subject of the proposed union. The overtures of the Canadian Conference were received by the parent body with lively satisfaction, and warmly supported by leading members of the Conference. The Rev. Mr. Beecham, at the conclusion of an able speech reviewing the principal facts bearing upon the question, read the address of the Canada Conference proposing a union with the British body. He was followed by the Rev. Jabez Bunting, who strongly advocated the proposed union as desirable for the interests of our common Methodism, our common Christianity, our common Empire. The proposals for union were then carefully considered, and the views of the Conference embodied in a series of resolutions differing but slightly from those adopted in Canada, the Rev. George Marsden and Joseph Stinson being appointed representatives, with authority to perfect the arrangement so happily inaugurated. The delegates reached Canada a few days before the assembling of the Conference, which met at York on the 2nd of October 1833. After preliminary business, the address and resolutions of the British Conference were read, and the Rev. Mr. Marsden gave an account of what had taken place in England on the subject of union, and assured the Conference of the deep interest in the question felt by the English preachers. Mr. Ryerson also presented and read the report of his mission to England. The articles of union, as agreed to by the British Conference, were then taken up *seriatim*, and after a careful examination it was unanimously "resolved that this Conference cordially concurs in the adoption of the resolutions agreed to by the

British Conference, dated Manchester, 7th August 1833, as the basis of union between the two Conferences." A session of the General Conference was then called to consider certain changes in the discipline rendered necessary by the union measure. These having been ratified by the requisite constitutional majorities, the Annual Conference resumed; whereupon the Secretary reported the action of the General Conference, and the union, so earnestly desired by the great body of preachers and people, was an accomplished fact.

In consummating the union, no principle essential to Methodism was abolished or changed. The doctrines were untouched, and from every Methodist pulpit in the land sounded forth, after the union, the same glorious truths as before. Nor was there any change in the distinctive usages of Methodism. The weekly prayer-meeting still sent up its cloud of incense; in the class-meeting the faithful still "spake one to another"; while in the quarterly love-feast, these scattered lights of individual experience were gathered into an intenser focus, showing "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Nor yet was anything done whereby the rights and privileges of the membership of the Church were invaded in the slightest degree. All that they enjoyed before the union they enjoyed equally after. They heard the same doctrines, candidates were received into the Church in the same way, held their membership by the same tenure, and could be excluded only by the same disciplinary process. Nor could any change be made in the temporal economy of the Church without the consent of two thirds of the quarterly official meetings of the Connexion. In no

other branch of the Methodist Church at that day was an equal influence wielded by the laity.

The sentiment enunciated by the Rev. Jabez Bunting, that the proposed union was in the interests of our common Empire, is deserving of especial emphasis. At that time those political agitations which culminated in the rebellion of 1837 were already in progress. It does not fall within my province to express any opinion as to the causes which led to that unhappy strife, nor to decide whether armed resistance to the Government was in any degree justifiable. I merely express the conviction of all thoughtful men that the separation of Canada from the British Empire in 1837 would have been a calamity of no ordinary magnitude. This was perceived by many persons years before the rebellion actually took place, and they felt that it was the part of loyal and patriotic men to do everything in their power to strengthen those filial ties which united Canada to the Mother Country. That a union of the Canadian with the British Conference would have this tendency, no one could fail to see; and this was one reason why the union was, in some quarters, so strongly opposed. No reflection whatever is intended upon those who on purely ecclesiastical or denominational grounds opposed the union; their loyalty and devotion to the Empire was beyond question; but it is an undeniable fact that some of the strongest opponents of the measure were persons not connected with the Methodist Church, foremost among whom was the late William Lyon Mackenzie, the leader of the rebellion, and others who sympathised with his views. I do not for one moment argue that any religious principle should ever be sacrificed to mere expediency, or that the

Church should ever be employed for political ends; but I do say that the men who in 1833 waived all personal considerations in order to consummate a union which, without sacrificing any principle of Christianity or of Methodism, aided the work of God and strengthened the connexion existing between Canada and Great Britain, were men who deserved well of their Church and their country, and are fairly entitled to be remembered both as Christians and as patriots.

Certain events which occurred in the next fourteen years—the Episcopal Methodist separation, the dissolution of the union in 1840 and its restoration in 1847—are reserved for consideration in another connexion. Although they are things of the past, they all had an important bearing on the development of Canadian Methodism, and are entitled to a place in its annals. But for the present I turn to a series of events in which Methodism became unexpectedly a powerful factor in shaping public opinion, and in securing for all creeds and classes both civil and religious rights and privileges which to some of them had long been denied.

IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

To understand the nature of this energetic and protracted struggle, as well as the relation of Methodism thereto, it is necessary to recall the civil conditions of the period and the character of the Government that had been established in both Upper and Lower Canada. As yet the principles of representative and especially of responsible government were imperfectly understood, and in official circles were not recognised at all. Even the tremendous object-lesson of the American Revolution had failed to teach English statesmen that a period had been reached when "government from Downing Street" had become impracticable among Anglo-Saxon colonists, however well it might answer among "lesser breeds without the law"; and it was only when a second revolution had almost succeeded on Canadian soil that they awoke to the full significance of the situation, and recognised the principle of responsible self-government as the indispensable basis of an intelligent and enduring loyalty to the Crown. All impartial students of Canadian history are glad that the rebellion of 1837 did not succeed. Had it been otherwise, it would have meant the absorption of British

America by the American Republic, which would not have been a good thing for the Republic nor for us, and would have rendered impossible the establishment of a system of government having all the stability of English political institutions, affording the fullest measure of civil and religious liberty, but with checks and safeguards that would prevent liberty from degenerating into licence, and ensure a reign of law and order instead of virtual mob control.

Attention has already been called to the fact that in 1791 the province of Quebec was divided into two, named respectively Upper and Lower Canada. This was accomplished under Mr. Pitt's administration, and is known as the Constitutional Act of 1791. Whatever may have been the ostensible reasons for this legislation, it was, in effect, less a geographical than a race division, and for this reason was strongly opposed by Mr. Fox, who contended that the separation of the English from the French inhabitants was most undesirable. Mr. Fox was right in theory, but it seemed to the statesmen of the period that his views were sentimental rather than practical, and did not meet existing conditions. Fox contended for a principle; Pitt's measure was a mere expedient, and, like expedients in general, proved defective when exposed to the strain of conflicting interests. In fact, it was the deliberate intention of the law-makers that Lower Canada should be French and Roman Catholic, and that Upper Canada should be English and Protestant, and Mr. Pitt's legislation was shaped with that end in view. To suppose that this could be effected by an imaginary line laid out by surveyors and drawn to a scale upon a map, seems

almost ludicrous. Race instincts and human enterprise pay small heed to legislative enactments, and so, spite of the good intentions of the politicians, thousands of English-speaking Protestants mingled with the business and political life of Lower Canada, while tens of thousands of French Canadians swarmed across the Ottawa and filled up whole counties on its south-western banks.

The system of government instituted by Mr. Pitt's legislation held within it elements of conflict and disaster. Each province was to have a Legislative Assembly, elected by British subjects possessing certain property qualifications, and a Legislative Council, whose members were appointed by the Crown. Two such chambers—the one elective and responsible, the other non-elective and irresponsible—could not long exist side by side without conflict, and in the long-run the one must dominate the other. In both provinces there was a steady effort to establish and maintain the supremacy of the Legislative Council, and to make the popular Assembly the servant of its will. For a time this policy succeeded only too well. In Upper Canada all administration and patronage was in the hands of the Legislative Council, and that body secured the election to the Assembly of many of its servants—post-masters, sheriffs, registrars, revenue officers, and the like—who conceived it to be their chief duty to support the Government from which they had received their appointments, irrespective of the rights and wishes of the people. The ruling faction in the Council became known as the "Family Compact," not because its members were united by family ties, but because their close association and resolute purpose to control the affairs of Government

recalled the *Pacte de Famille* of the Bourbons of France, Spain, and Italy in 1761, in their combination against Great Britain. This junto had imported from Europe the tradition of a "ruling class," and the twin doctrines of its political creed were loyalty—as they understood it—to the British sovereign and a bigoted attachment to the Church of England. It must not be supposed that the opposing party, in Parliament or out of it, were one whit less loyal to the Crown, but their loyalty was of a different type, for they held tenaciously by the dictum of Burke, that "the subject who is truly loyal to the chief magistrate will neither advise nor submit to arbitrary measures." The abuses which had grown up under the reign of the Family Compact were tersely described by the Earl of Durham in 1838, in his *Report on the Affairs of British North America*:

"For a long time this body of men, receiving at times accessions to its members, possessed almost all the highest public offices, by means of which, and of its influence in the Executive Council, it wielded all the powers of government. It maintained influence in the Legislature by means of its predominance in the Legislative Council, and it disposed of a large number of petty posts which are in the patronage of the Government all over the province. Successive Governors, as they came in their turn, are said to have either submitted quietly to its influence, or, after a short and unavailing struggle, to have yielded to this well organised party the real conduct of affairs. The Bench, the magistracy, the high offices of the Episcopal Church, and a great part of the legal profession, are filled by the adherents of this party. By

grant or purchase they have acquired nearly the whole of the waste lands of the province; they are all-powerful in the chartered banks, and, till lately, shared among themselves, almost exclusively, all offices of trust and profit. . . . The principal members of it belong to the Church of England, and the maintenance of the claims of that Church has always been one of its distinguishing characteristics." [1]

The Act of 1791 not only provided for the government of the provinces it had created, but also for the maintenance and support of a Protestant clergy. To accomplish this end, one seventh of all the public lands in Upper Canada opened for settlement, and one seventh of all that should be opened in future in Lower Canada for a similar purpose, were set apart and became known as the "Clergy Reserves," and authority was given for the erection of "parsonages or rectories, according to the establishment of the Church of England," to be endowed out of the lands so reserved. At the conquest of Canada the right of the French Roman Catholic inhabitants to the enjoyment of their language and religion was guaranteed by the Treaty of Paris (1763), and in the following year an Act of the British Parliament secured to the clergy of that Church the right to their accustomed tithes and dues. The same Act made provision for the encouragement of the Protestant religion and the support of a Protestant clergy by other tithes and dues, and these continued to be collected for nearly forty years; but in 1821 a declaratory Act was passed by the Legislature of Upper Canada, and sanctioned by the Crown, providing that hereafter "no tithes shall be claimed, demanded, or

[1] *Report*, p. 105.

received by any ecclesiastical parson, rector, or vicar of the Protestant Church within this province."

In the struggle for religious equality the Legislation of 1764 was not a very important factor, and the real battle was waged around the Clergy Reserves and the Legislation of 1791. The tithe system, so far as Protestantism was concerned, found few defenders, and was bound, soon or later, to go to the wall; but the Clergy Reserves rested upon a somewhat different footing, and not a few doughty champions were found to defend the wisdom and righteousness of the arrangement. Foremost among these was the Rev. John Strachan, D.D., Archdeacon of York, and afterwards the first Anglican bishop of Toronto. Like many another man who has made his mark in the world, the archdeacon was the son of humble Scottish parents, staunch adherents of the Kirk of Scotland. With that thirst for knowledge which is characteristic of his countrymen, young Strachan obtained some classical training, and served as a tutor, first in Scotland and afterwards at Kingston in Upper Canada. Subsequently he taught a grammar school at Cornwall, where he had under his tuition a number of lads who afterwards became men of note in the history of the province. Here he united with the Church of England, and when he entered its ministry became, in rapid succession, Rector and Archdeacon of York, chaplain to the Legislative Assembly, a member of the Legislative Council, and in 1839 was raised to the episcopal dignity as the first bishop of Toronto. Small in stature, by no means impressive in appearance, but resolute, energetic, untiring, an astute politician by nature, an ecclesiastic from choice, and a bigoted Churchman

withal, he was for many years a power in the religious and political life of the country.

About this time there appeared upon the stage another man who was destined to play a very important part in the religious, educational, and political development of Upper Canada; a man who for years fought, sometimes almost single-handed, the battle of civil and religious liberty, and proved himself the only competent and successful antagonist of the astute and able Anglican bishop in the latter's lifelong attempt to make the Church of England the dominating power in the religious, social, and even political life of the province. Egerton Ryerson was the son of a U.E. Loyalist, who held a commission in the Prince of Wales' Regiment of New Jersey, of which place he was a native. At the close of the revolutionary war he emigrated to New Brunswick, where he married, and toward the end of the century removed with his family to Upper Canada, and settled on a farm in the Long Point country, on the northern shore of Lake Erie. Egerton was the youngest of four brothers, the three older being named respectively George, William, and John. All four became deeply religious, all four joined the Methodist Church, and all four became Methodist preachers, much against the will of their father, who was a staunch, not to say bigoted, Churchman. So strong was his opposition that he gave Egerton the choice to leave the Methodists or to leave his father's house. It was a most painful alternative, but the young convert did not hesitate. The next day he left home and became an usher in a district grammar school.

Of the four Ryersons who entered the Methodist ministry, the eldest brother served for only three years,

when he located. Subsequently his views of divine truth and church order underwent considerable change, and he undertook to found a new church on what he conceived to be the apostolic model, naming it the "Catholic Apostolic Church." The term "Catholic" proved almost a grim satire, as only a very few congregations were ever gathered, and I know only one which exists to-day. The remaining three brothers, especially the youngest, all became men of mark in Canadian Methodism, and for many years exerted a controlling influence in the councils of the Church. John had the characteristics of an ecclesiastical legislator, and had much to do with shaping the discipline of the Methodist body; William was the popular orator, mighty in exhortation, and his pulpit appeals are still a tradition in the land; Egerton was a born statesman, far-seeing and sagacious, and as a controversialist had no peer in his day. In him was illustrated the saying that "the child is father of the man." From the time of his conversion he became a diligent student. While serving as usher in a grammar school, at eighteen years of age, he read with avidity such books as were available, taking "great delight in Locke *On the Human Understanding*, Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, and Blackstone's Commentaries, especially the sections of the latter on the Prerogatives of the Crown, the Rights of the Subject, and the Province of Parliament."[1] All this was an unconscious preparation for providential tasks that awaited him in future years, and stood him in good stead when fighting the battle of civil and religious equality. In 1824, at the request of the presiding elder, Mr. Ryerson consented to supply a circuit

[1] Ryerson's *Story of My Life*, p. 27.

left vacant by the illness of one of the preachers. The following year he was received on trial for the ministry, ordained a deacon in 1827, and an elder in 1829. The same year it was decided to begin the publication of a weekly newspaper—a most courageous venture in those early days. Mr. Ryerson was chosen as the future editor, and was instructed to proceed to New York to procure the necessary plant. There were very few newspapers in the country at the time, and the *Christian Guardian*—so the new paper was named—came at once to the front as a powerful organ of public opinion. Its objects were "defence of Methodist institutions and character, civil rights, temperance principles, educational progress, and missionary operations."[1] And it was conducted with such vigour that it soon became recognised as the champion of equal rights and privileges for all creeds and classes, and a fearless opponent of a dominant church establishment in Upper Canada. It should be understood that up to this time the Methodist and other denominations had no right to hold land for places of worship or for the burial of their dead, nor had the Methodist ministers the right to solemnise matrimony even among their own people.

In 1825 Egerton Ryerson had been stationed at York, and it was during this year that he was unwillingly drawn into the great controversy. At that time the York circuit comprised the town of York (now Toronto) and ten townships to the east, west, and north, and over these the itinerants travelled, preaching from twenty-five to thirty sermons every four weeks, besides meeting numerous classes and visiting from house to house. "The roads (if in any

[1] Ryerson's *Story of My Life*, p. 98.

sense they could be called roads) were bad beyond description, could be travelled only on horseback and on foot, the labours hard, and the accommodations of the most primitive kind; but we were received as angels of God by the people, our ministrations being almost the only supply of religious instruction to them; and nothing they valued more than to have the preacher partake of their humble and best hospitality."[1] Such conditions were by no means favourable to those habits of wide reading, close thinking, and careful writing which would seem to be indispensable in a controversy involving in the long-run great constitutional principles, and covering much historical ground both ecclesiastical and civil. That the task should have been undertaken by a youth not long out of his teens, and entirely untrained in controversy, would seem to indicate extraordinary temerity, or else such an overwhelming sense of duty as rendered him insensible to all personal considerations. That the latter consideration was the dominant factor there can be no doubt; and now that we look back upon the period, over the lapse of three quarters of a century, the conviction deepens that in the Methodist stripling we behold the divinely anointed David whose providential call it was to smite the Goliath of civil oppression and religious intolerance who had defied the armies of the living God. Features and physique were alike striking. Of medium size, or a little over, well proportioned and firmly knit, fair complexion, large speaking blue eyes, firm lips, well defined eyebrows, a head unusually large but well balanced, and a height, breadth, and fulness of forehead that attracted instant attention,

[1] Ryerson's *Story of My Life*, p. 47.

Egerton Ryerson impressed himself, even upon casual acquaintances, as a man of no ordinary powers. In middle and later life his was one of those lion-like faces that recalled William Ewart Gladstone and Daniel Webster, but with a far more benevolent expression than Webster's face revealed. Such, in outward appearance, was the youthful champion who, at the call of duty, boldly crossed swords with the most skilful controversialists of his time.

The immediate cause of his first controversy may now be stated. In April 1826 a pamphlet appeared entitled, *Sermon Preached and Published by the Venerable Archdeacon of York, on the Death of the late Bishop of Quebec.* This publication contained a sketch of the rise and progress of the Church of England in the Canadas, and an appeal on behalf of that Church to the British Government and Parliament. Had the archdeacon stopped at that point it is doubtful if the sermon would have attracted much attention, but he proceeded to attack the character and standing of other religious communions, especially the Methodists, "whose ministers were represented as American in their origin and feelings, ignorant, forsaking their proper employments to preach what they did not understand, and which, from their pride, they disdained to learn; and who were spreading disaffection to the civil and religious institutions of Great Britain."[1] It was claimed that the Church of England was the Established Church not only of Great Britain but of the whole Empire, and as such was exclusively entitled to the Clergy Reserves of Upper

[1] Ryerson's *Story of My Life*, p. 48.

Canada. Besides this, an appeal was made to the British Government for an annual grant of $300,000 to enable the Church of England in Upper Canada to maintain the loyalty of the people of that province to the English Crown. The utterly undeserved character of the aspersions thus cast upon the Methodist Church aroused feelings of strong indignation. Scarcely more than a decade had passed since the close of the unprovoked war of 1812–15 with the United States, at which time the Methodists, both ministers and people, had been conspicuous for devotion to their country and Government. But let the circumstances be as they might, the archdeacon did not seem to be aware how he was degrading his own Church by seeking to have it endowed as a police institution to dragoon the people of Upper Canada in the knowledge and practice of "loyalty," which, from his point of view, meant not so much intelligent devotion to the Crown and Constitution, as entire subservience to the Church of England.

There was consternation in the little Methodist camp in York, which at that time numbered only about fifty persons, though the entire membership for the province was seven thousand five hundred. It was felt that something must be done, and by tacit consent they turned to the "Boy Preacher," as Ryerson was then called, on account of his youthful appearance, as the one who should undertake the task. He strongly objected, on the grounds of his youth and incompetency, but finally suggested that on their next country tour the superintendent of the circuit (Rev. James Richardson) and himself should each write on the subject, and on their return something might be compiled

from the two documents that would meet the case. On the return of the preachers they met the leading members of the society, when it was found that young Ryerson had written something, but his superintendent had not. Those present insisted that the paper should be read, and when this was done they insisted, with equal earnestness, that it be printed. Finding remonstrance in vain, the author offered to rewrite the article more carefully, and then return it to the brethren to do what they pleased with it. This was agreed to, and when the manuscript was finished it was taken to the printer and promptly issued. It was entitled a "Review of the Sermon published by Archdeacon Strachan," and appeared in the *Colonial Advocate* over the signature of "A Methodist Preacher." The immediate effect of the "review" was remarkable, for it was not only a defence of the Methodists against unjust aspersions, but a vindication of the civil rights of all religious persuasions, and a protest on legal and constitutional grounds against the erection in Canada of a dominant Church. The archdeacon's sermon was the third formal attack by Church of England clergy upon the Methodist Church and its ministers, but thus far no line had been written or word spoken in public in their defence. When the "review" appeared great was the excitement. It was read as eagerly as a bulletin from the field of battle would be read to-day. The Methodists were jubilant. They felt that at last a champion had appeared capable not only of defending their Church from unjust assaults, but of advocating with convincing force the great constitutional principles of civil and religious equality so imperfectly understood at the time. The interest was all the greater

because, outside of a very narrow circle, no one knew who the new champion might be.

In the opposing camp there was positive consternation. Feelings of astonishment, of dismay, of anger, followed each other in rapid succession; astonishment that anyone could be found to defend the despised sect of Methodists, dismay because their own stronghold was so fearlessly assailed, and anger that anyone should have the temerity to attack existing civil conditions or to question the right of the Church of England to lord it over God's heritage. The battle was fairly on. Within two weeks four answers appeared in the newspapers, three by clergymen and one by a layman of the Church of England. But in these answers epithets were more plentiful than arguments. The writers were all agreed that the author of the "review" could not be a Methodist preacher: he was "an American," "a rebel," "a traitor," and the pamphlet was "the prodigious effort of a party." It would be idle to pretend that Mr. Ryerson was not affected by the storm he had raised; it affected him very keenly. There were days when he could not eat and nights when he could not sleep. But he felt that the battle was not of his seeking—the attack had come from the other side—and that either he must continue the conflict or acknowledge defeat. Those who knew the man in after-years would not be surprised to learn that he decided to fight. As a characteristic preparation he devoted a day to fasting and prayer, and then having drawn the sword in what he felt to be a righteous cause, he flung away the scabbard and went at his adversaries in dead earnest. To follow the details is not necessary. Suffice it to say that in less than

four years from the commencement of the controversy laws were passed authorising the various religious bodies to hold land for churches, parsonages, and burial-grounds, and empowering their ministers to solemnise marriages. At this time there were members of the Legislature not a few who were in favour of reform, and without their aid the desired enactments could not have been secured; but beyond question Mr. Ryerson's advocacy did more than all other agencies combined to arouse public opinion and bring pressure to bear upon the law-makers of the day. His "review" was first published in the *Colonial Advocate*, a paper established by William Lyon Mackenzie, and we obtain a glimpse of its effect in some directions in the following extract: "The sermon was ably reviewed in the columns of the *Colonial Advocate* in a communication over the signature of 'A Methodist Preacher.' Mr. Metcalf and I took the paper into a field, where we sat down on the grass to read. As we read we admired; and as we admired we rejoiced; then thanked God and speculated as to its author, little suspecting that it was a young man who had been received on trial at the late Conference (1825). We read again, and then devoutly thanked God for having put into the heart of someone to defend the Church publicly against such mischievous statements, and give the world the benefit of the facts in the case. . . . This was the commencement of the war for religious liberty."[1] Quite different, however, was the effect in another direction. When visiting his parents a few months after the controversy began, Mr. Ryerson found that his father's conversation turned constantly to the

[1] *Life and Times of Anson Green, D.D.*, pp. 83,'84.

subject that was agitating the country, though he did not know as yet who was the author of the letters. Something must have aroused his suspicion, however, for one day he turned abruptly to his son and said, "Egerton, they say that you are the author of these papers which are convulsing the whole country. I want to know whether you are or not?" Egerton admitted that he was; whereupon his father lifted his hands with a despairing gesture and exclaimed, "My God, we are all ruined!"[1]

The people of Canada have long been so accustomed to the fullest measure of civil liberty and religious equality that they fail to appreciate the importance of the interests involved in the controversy of 1826 and succeeding years, or the bitter and unscrupulous opposition with which the champion of popular rights had to contend. Perhaps the situation cannot be better described than in the language of J. George Hodgins, LL.D., the lifelong friend of Dr. Ryerson, his associate for many years in the Education Department of Ontario, and editor of Dr. Ryerson's *Story of My Life*:

"Few in the present day can realise the magnitude of the task thus undertaken. Nor do we sufficiently estimate the significance of the issues involved in that contest—a contest waged for the recognition of equal denominational rights and the supremacy of religious liberty. All these questions are now happily settled upon the best and surest foundation. But it might have been far otherwise had not such men as Dr. Ryerson stepped into the breach at a critical time in our early history, and had not the battle been fought and won before the dis-

[1] Ryerson's *Story of My Life*, p. 51.

tasteful yoke of an 'establishment' had been imposed upon the young country, and burdensome vested interests had been thereby created, which would have taken years of serious and protracted strife to have extinguished.

. . . . . .

"To those who have given any attention to this subject, it is well known that the maintenance of the views put forth by Dr. Ryerson in this controversy involved personal odium and the certainty of social ostracism. It also involved, what is often more fatal to a man's courage and constancy, the sneer and personal animosity, as well as ridicule, of a powerful party whose right to supremacy is questioned, and whose monopoly of what is common property is in danger of being destroyed. Although Dr. Ryerson was a gentleman by birth, and the son of a British officer and U.E. Loyalist, yet the fact that, as one of the 'despised sect' of Methodists, he dared to question the right of 'the Church' to superiority over the 'Sectaries,' subjected him to a system of petty and bitter persecution which few men of less fortitude and nerve could have borne. As it was, there were times when the tender sensibilities of his noble nature were so deeply wounded by this injustice, and the scorn and contumely of his opponents, that were it not that his intrepid courage was of the finest type, and without the alloy of rancour or bravado in it, it would have failed him. But he never flinched. And when the odds seemed to be most against him he would, with humble dependence upon divine help, put forth even greater effort; and, with his courage thus reanimated, would unexpectedly turn the flank of his enemy; or by concentrating all his forces on

the vulnerable points of his adversaries' case, completely neutralise the force of his attack.

. . . . . .

"Those who had the courage, and who ventured to oppose the church claims put forth by the clerical and other leaders of the dominant party of that time, were sure to be singled out for personal attack. They were also made to feel the chilling effect of social exclusiveness. The cry against them was that of ignorance, irreverence, irreligion, republicanism, disloyalty, etc. These charges were repeated in every form, and that, too, by a section both of the official and religious press, a portion of which was edited with singular ability; a press which prided itself on its intelligence, its unquestioned churchmanship and exalted respect for sacred things, its firm devotion to the principle of Church and State, the maintenance of which was held to be the only safeguard for society, if not its invincible bulwark. An illustration of the profession of this exclusive loyalty is given by Dr. Ryerson in these pages (*The Story of My Life*). He mentions the fact that the plea to the British Government put forth by the leaders of the dominant party as a reason why the Church of England in this province should be made supreme and subsidised, was that she might be enabled 'to preserve the principles of loyalty to England from being overwhelmed and destroyed' by the 'Yankee Methodists' as represented by the Ryersons and their friends."[1]

In the troublous times of which I now speak the only possible way of obtaining redress of grievances was to

[1] Ryerson's *Story of My Life*. Editorial comment by J. George Hodgins, LL.D., pp. 95–98.

appeal to the British Government; but it was by no means certain that such an appeal would be successful. The dominant faction in the Legislative Council was resolutely opposed to everything in the shape of reform in Church or State, and as official etiquette required that memorials or petitions to the Crown should pass through the medium of the King's representative, there was abundant opportunity for the opponents of reform to acquaint themselves with the contents of any document intended for transmission to England, and to take steps to counteract its influence. In 1830 attention was called, through the *Christian Guardian*, of which Egerton Ryerson was then the editor, to a case of this kind. Referring to the Religious Societies Relief Bill of that period, the editor remarked that "His Majesty's royal assent would have been given to that Bill had it not unfortunately fallen in company with some ruthless vagrant (in the shape of a communication from our enemies in Canada) who had slandered, abused, and tomahawked it at the foot of the throne."

The extent to which the spirit of religious intolerance and contempt for Methodism had permeated the highest official circles may be inferred from the following incident. In 1831 the Conference presented a respectful address to the Governor, Sir John Colborne, remonstrating against the establishment of a State Church in Canada, the exclusive control of the Clergy Reserves by that Church, and the endowment of a university under the same control. In the present day such an address would be regarded as quite within the rights of any body of men, but not so in 1831. In his reply the Governor said:

"Your dislike to any church establishment, or to the particular form of Christianity which is denominated the Church of England, may be the natural consequence of the constant success of your own efficacious and organised system. The small number of our Church is to be regretted, as well as that the organisation of its ministry is not adapted to supply the present wants of the dispersed population in this new country; but you will readily admit that the sober-minded of the province are disgusted with the accounts of the disgraceful dissensions of the Methodist Episcopal Church in its separatists, recriminating memorials, and the warfare of one church with another. The utility of an establishment depends entirely on the piety, assiduity, and devoted zeal of its ministers, and on their abstaining from a secular interference which may involve them in political disputes.

"The labours of the clergy of established churches in defence of moral and religious truth will always be remembered by you who have access to their writings, and benefited by them in common with other Christian societies. You will allow, I have no doubt, on reflection, that it would indeed be imprudent to admit the right of societies to dictate, on account of their numerical strength, in what way the land set apart for the clergy shall be disposed of.

"The system of education which has produced the best and ablest men in the United Kingdom will not be abandoned here to suit the limited views of the leaders of societies who, perhaps, have neither experience nor judgment to appreciate the value or advantage of a liberal education."

The most charitable construction which can be put upon

this extraordinary document is to suppose that it was written by some prejudiced private secretary or member of the Council, and read by the Governor without being revised. Not content with informing the deputation, in effect, that they were only a parcel of ignorant boors, who had neither experience nor judgment "to appreciate the value or advantage of a liberal education," his Excellency proceeded to administer a sharp rebuke on "the absurd advice offered by your missionaries to the Indians, and their officious interference." It appears that in some cases at least the Indian agents were men who cared nothing for the moral and social elevation of the Indians, but exploited them for their own profit, and were bitter against the Methodist missionaries who opposed their designs. The "absurd advice" was to the effect that the Indians should apply to their great Father to remove such agents from among them. Very sound advice, one would think, but not so thought the agents, who sought to prejudice the Governor and his Council—all too willing to listen—against the Methodist missionaries who had the courage to bring the abuses to light. The matter was fully investigated by a representative of the Methodist Church (the Rev. James Richardson) and thoroughly ventilated through the columns of the *Christian Guardian*, leading to the conclusion expressed by the editor "that the advice given to the Indians was both prudent and loudly called for, and perfectly respectful to his Excellency." The result of it all was that the Governor reconsidered the case, reproved the officers of the Indian Department, and gave suitable instruction as to their treatment of the Methodist missionaries.

The attitude and claims of the Church of England at this period involved two vital issues. The first was the inherent right of the Church of England to be an established church in every part of the British Empire, and therefore in Upper Canada; and this carried with it the right of that Church to the exclusive control of the Clergy Reserves. The second issue was the undoubted fact that the admission of this inherent right would extinguish the claim of each of the Nonconformist bodies to the status of a Church. It will be seen, therefore, that these bodies were fighting for their very existence, and that in the struggle no quarter could be asked or granted. It was literally a battle to the death. As an evidence that the dominant party contemplated nothing short of the extinction of Methodism in Upper Canada, I may refer to the fact that in 1831 Donald Bethune of Kingston, and certain others, petitioned the House of Assembly "to prohibit any exercise of the function of a priest, or exhorter, or elder of any denomination in the province, except by British subjects; second, to prevent any religious society connected with any foreign religious body to assemble in Conference; third, to prevent the raising of money by any religious person or body for objects which are not strictly British," etc. The petition was clearly aimed at the Methodists, but the petitioners did not seem to be aware of the fact that all official connexion with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States had been severed more than two years before. The House, after referring the matter to a committee, and calling a number of witnesses, expressed the judgment "that it was inconsistent with the benign and tolerant principles of the

British Constitution to restrain by penal enactment any denomination of Christians, whether subjects or foreigners," from the exercise of their worship or duties.

In the sermon by Archdeacon Strachan, already referred to, aid was sought from the Imperial Parliament on this ground, among others, that unless the Church of England was greatly strengthened there was danger that republican principles would be instilled into the minds of the people by the religious teachers of other denominations, who, he affirmed, "come almost universally from the United States of America." Combating this statement, the reviewer boldly affirms, "The assertion is not true. They are not Republicans, neither are they infected with republican principles, nor have they come almost exclusively from the republican States of America. Seven eighths of the teachers among dissenters are British-born subjects. And out of the whole body of Methodist itinerant preachers, who seem to be the principal butt of the Doctor's hatred, there are only eight who have not been born and educated in the British dominions. And of those eight, all except two have been naturalised British subjects according to the statute of the province." Continuing his defence of his brethren the reviewer inquires, "Have the dissenters in this country ever shown a disposition in any way hostile to the true interests of the colony? Have they not been quiet in time of peace and bold in time of war? Answer, ye parents who mourn the loss of patriotic sons who yielded up the ghost on the field of battle. Speak, ye fatherless children, the dying groans of whose dissenting fathers proclaimed that they could die in defence of the British Constitution and yet be unconnected with a

religious establishment. Bear witness, ye disconsolate widows, whose dissenting husbands' loyalty has doomed you to perpetual melancholy. Lift up your voices, ye unfortunate invalids, whose lacerated limbs speak more than volumes that they are slanderers and liars who say that the religious any more than the political dissenters in Canada are not true to the 'political institutions of England.'"

It should be distinctly understood that in this bitter controversy, which disturbed the whole country for years, the Methodists were not the aggressors. Though repeatedly assailed and maligned, in public and in private, they kept silent until forbearance ceased to be a virtue. When forced at last into controversy, they stood on the defensive, and it was only when driven by continued injustice into aggressive action that they "carried the war into Africa," and assailed those who had assailed them, and that to such good purpose that in a few years the original aggressors were driven from every stronghold, and the claim of all denominations to a status of religious equality was universally recognised. As early as 1820 the clergy of the Church of Scotland in Upper Canada, though very few in number, began to assert their claim to a share of the Clergy Reserves. The question came before the House of Assembly in 1824, and in that and the three succeeding years resolutions were passed remonstrating against the exclusive claims of the Church of England. For five or six years there was much controversy, but the Methodists took no part in it, although they suffered more than others from malicious attacks and civil disabilities. The first public defence of the Methodists, and incidentally of other denominations, appeared in the review of Arch-

deacon Strachan's sermon already referred to, and even then the Church question was but lightly touched.

As the archdeacon's extraordinary sermon on the death of Bishop Mountain precipitated the first battle of the war for civil and religious liberty, so his still more extraordinary chart and accompanying letter precipitated the second. The object of the chart and letter, and of Dr. Strachan's visit to England in 1827, was to procure additional grants for the support of the Church of England in Canada, and a charter and endowment for a university. In the letter, which was intended for the information of Lord Goderich, Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, it is affirmed that "the teachers of the different denominations, with the exception of two ministers of the Church of Scotland, four Congregational ministers, and a respectable English missionary who presided over a Wesleyan Methodist meeting in Kingston, are for the most part from the United States, where they gather their knowledge and form their sentiments. Indeed, the Methodist teachers are subject to the orders of the United States of America, and it is manifest that the Colonial Government neither has nor can have any other control over them, or prevent them from gradually rendering a large portion of the population, by their influence and instructions, hostile to our institutions, civil and religious, than by increasing the number of the established clergy. . . . Two or three hundred clergymen living in Upper Canada, in the midst of their congregations, and receiving the greater portion of their income from funds deposited in this country (England), must attach still more intimately the population of the colony to the

parent State. Their influence would gradually spread; they would infuse into the inhabitants a tone of feeling entirely English, and acquiring by degrees the direction of education, which the clergy of England have always possessed, the very first feelings, sentiments, and opinions of the youth must become British."

There could be no mistaking the objects which lay behind so remarkable a document. They were three in number. (1) The complete recognition of the Church of England in Upper Canada as the State Church and its endowment out of Imperial revenues and the Clergy Reserves. (2) The extirpation of various sects, especially the Methodists. (3) The absolute control of education throughout the province. A more complete scheme of ecclesiastical domination it would be difficult to imagine, and had it succeeded neither civil nor religious freedom would have been possible for generations. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the chart and letter found their way into the provincial newspapers, public feeling rose to fever heat. The slanderous attack upon the Methodist ministers, and the appeal to the Home Government to aid in exterminating heresy (for that is what it amounted to) excited widespread indignation and sympathy. Petitions were circulated in various parts of the province, and signed by nearly 5,700 persons, asking for a full investigation. In March 1828 these petitions were laid before the House of Assembly, and referred to a committee of five, who conducted a searching investigation, examining no less than fifty-two witnesses from various parts of the province and from various walks in life—clergymen, doctors, thirty members of Parliament, several members of the

Legislative Council (including Archdeacon Strachan), the Speaker of the House, two Indians, etc. The petition, on the basis of which the investigation was ordered, read in part as follows:

"In this communication (Dr. Strachan's letter) his Majesty is informed that the ministers of the different churches in this province, unconnected with the Protestant Episcopal Church, 'are for the most part from the United States, where they gather their knowledge and form their sentiments.' The Methodist preachers are particularly stigmatised with the charge of mixing up sedition with the word of God; and 'the other denominations' are represented as having few teachers, and those seemingly very ignorant.

"Could it be true that the Methodist preachers were rendering, by their influence and instructions, a large portion of the population hostile to our institutions, both civil and religious, the evil would be most alarming; and if the charge be credited in any degree by our gracious Sovereign, we feel with deep regret how low we must sink in his estimation, and how hopeless is our expectation of enjoying his royal confidence. Your petitioners know no difference between those who preach disaffection and those who habitually hear it. We notice with much anxiety in the same document a disposition expressed and recommended to pursue a policy which shall augment the number of the clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church from three hundred to two thousand; and by the addition of wealth, to be shared by no other denomination of Christians, gradually to acquire to themselves exclusively the superintendence of the

education of our children in the public schools. The end of such a system must be ecclesiastical dominion. It is asserted with much confidence by this sworn adviser of the representative of his Majesty, that 'the tendency of the population is toward the Church of England,' and that 'nothing but the want of moderate support prevents her from spreading over the whole province.'

"We have ascertained that a Royal Charter has been granted for the establishment of a university amongst us, the principle of which, we have good reason to fear, will be found inconsistent with the unimpaired preservation and maintenance of our civil and religious rights and privileges.

"We humbly pray that your honourable House would inquire into the principle upon which a university is to be established amongst us, so that *no* power to hold lands or other property be granted to, nor any addition to the number of members composing the House of Assembly made from or out of any ecclesiastical or literary body corporate, at whose hands danger could or might be apprehended to the Constitution, or to our religious liberties: and also that your honourable House would inquire into the truth of the above recited cruel charges and statements against the ministers and the people, and further to take such steps upon the premises to preserve us and our children from ecclesiastical domination, as to your wisdom shall seem fit."

In accordance with the inquiry the committee formulated a series of fourteen questions, out of which grew a few others, covering the main points raised by the archdeacon's chart and letter. These questions were printed, and the witnesses were asked to hand in written

answers. Most of the answers displayed remarkable unanimity of opinion. While occasionally differing upon minor points, or on what were purely matters of opinion, the witnesses, with few exceptions, were entirely in accord in their answers to the main questions. They were conclusive that, in the judgment of the witnesses, the ministers of denominations unconnected with the Church of England were not, for the most part, from the United States, and did not gather their knowledge or form their sentiments from that source; that the influence and instruction of the Methodist preachers had no tendency to render the people hostile to British institutions;[1] that an increase in the number of missionaries of the Church of England would not render our people more attached to our civil and religious institutions; that the tendency of the population in the province at this time was not toward the Church of England, nor was it spreading to the extent that had been claimed; that the people of the province were not in favour of having one or more churches or denominations established by law with exclusive rights, privileges, or endowments; that they did not wish the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves to be given to clergymen of the Church of England, but that they be devoted to general education and internal improvements. Replying to a question concerning the relative strength of other denominations compared with the Church of England, the witnesses concur in giving the Methodists foremost place. The Speaker of the House thought "they might, in regard

[1] It was clearly shown that in the war of 1812 the Methodists were as zealous as any in defence of the province; that several ministers voluntarily served in flank companies, and were in several engagements, in which two of them were wounded.

to numbers, be arranged thus: 1st, Methodists; 2nd, Presbyterians (including Scotch Kirk, Seceders, Independents, Congregationalists, etc.); 3rd, Catholics; 4th, Baptists; 5th, Church of England." Questioned about the ecclesiastical chart, the witnesses were agreed that it was not a fair representation of the standing and character of the various denominations in Upper Canada. As to the relation of Methodist preachers in Upper Canada to the Conference in the United States, the Rev. William Case gave the following evidence:

"The Methodist preachers who came into this province were from the Methodist Conference in the State of New York, about the year 1790. They continued to be accountable to that Conference for their moral deportment, and their characters were carefully examined, till August 1824, since which time the affairs of the Methodist Church in Canada have been transacted by the Canada Conference. At no time did the Methodist Conference in the United States exercise or claim any control of a temporal nature over the Methodists in Canada. Their services were purely of a spiritual nature. To supply the wants of a destitute country they laboured freely and for many years at considerable sacrifice of property and even of health and life; and some of their ministers, by excessive toil in a new country, expended both. The Colonial Government, I conceive, has the same control over the Methodists in this country that the British Government has over others of its subjects both in Europe and America."

The select committee having concluded its labours, the chairman, Marshall S. Bidwell, informed the House that a report had been adopted, and an address to his

Majesty founded thereon. On the following day the House went into committee of the whole, and, on the question of receiving the report, divided with the following result—yeas 22, nays 8. This was virtually a test vote, and indicated how the whole subject would be dealt with. The report was received and adopted; the address to the King was read a second time, adopted, and ordered to be read a third time on the following Thursday. On that day the address was passed by a vote of 21 to 9, and signed by the Speaker. The report and address were both remarkable documents. Calm, dignified, and explicit, they stated the results of the committee's deliberations with clearness and precision, and made request in a spirit befitting a grave, deliberative body. The parts of the report bearing more directly on the questions at issue are as follows:

"The committee have examined all the members of the House of Assembly whose testimony they could obtain; some members of the Honourable the Legislative Council, of long residence, high standing, and large possessions in the province; various clergymen of different denominations in York and its vicinity, and a few other individuals.

"From the evidence it will be perceived that the letter and chart were calculated to produce in many respects erroneous impressions respecting the religious state of this province and the sentiments of the inhabitants. As it seems from Dr. Strachan's evidence that they were drawn up suddenly from memory, and without the means of reference to sources of authentic information, it is much to be regretted that these circumstances had not been at

least hinted in the letter itself, and the more so when it is considered that, as he stated to the committee, he had never known the number of the Church of England in this province. The assertions in the letter, 'the people are coming forward in all directions offering to assist in building churches, and soliciting with the greatest anxiety the establishment of a settled minister; and that the tendency of the population is toward the Church of England, and nothing but the want of moderate support prevents her from spreading over the whole province,' are completely contradicted by the evidence.

. . . . . .

"The insinuation against the Methodist clergymen the committee have noticed with peculiar regret. To the disinterested and indefatigable exertions of these pious men this province owes much. At an early period in its history, when it was thinly settled and its inhabitants were scattered through the wilderness and destitute of all other means of religious instruction, these ministers of the gospel, animated by Christian zeal and benevolence, at the sacrifice of health and interest and comfort, carried among the people the blessings and consolations and sanctions of our holy religion. Their influence and instruction, far from having (as is represented in the letter) a tendency hostile to our institutions, have been conducive, in a degree that cannot be easily estimated, to the reformation of their hearers from licentiousness, and the diffusion of correct morals, the foundation of all sound loyalty and social order. There is no reason to believe that, as a body, they have failed to inculcate, by precept and example, as a Christian duty, an attachment to the Sovereign and a cheerful and

conscientious obedience to the laws of the country. More than thirty-five years have elapsed since they commenced their labours in the colonies. In that time the province has passed through a war which put to the proof their loyalty. If their influence and instructions have the tendency mentioned, the effects by this time must be manifest; yet no one doubts that the Methodists are as loyal as any of his Majesty's subjects. And the very fact that while their clergymen are dependent for their support upon the voluntary contributions of the people, the number of their members has increased so as to now, in the opinion of almost all the witnesses, be greater than that of the members of any other denomination in this province, is a complete refutation of any suspicion that their influence and instructions have such a tendency; for it would be a gross slander on the loyalty of the people to suppose that they would countenance and listen with complacency to those whose influence was exerted for such base purposes."

Referring to the question of a State Church, the committee pointed out that besides the Methodists there were other denominations more numerous than the Church of England, and that the latter constituted but a small part of the population of the whole province; "hence it would be unjust and impolitic to exalt" that "Church, by exclusive and peculiar rights, above all others of his Majesty's subjects who are equally loyal, conscientious, and deserving." It was further pointed out that there existed in the minds of the people generally "a strong and settled aversion to anything like an Established Church, and that an attempt to incorporate the Church of England, or any

other church, in such a capacity would excite alarm throughout the country, and the actual execution of such a measure would produce the most general and lasting discontent." There was no necessity for such an establishment, either for the ends of loyalty or religion. Moreover, were such a church established, men who were conscientiously opposed to its doctrines or form of worship would be compelled, in the very nature of the case, "to oppose one of the civil institutions of the country, a part of the Government itself," which would render them objects of jealousy and suspicion, until "their very conscientiousness comes by degrees to be regarded and treated as a crime." The next paragraph of the committee's report, dealing with a different matter, deserves to be transcribed at length:

"In the course of their inquiries, the committee obtained information which, to their surprise and regret, gave them reason to believe that, to create in the minds of the Indians recently converted, under the divine blessing, to the Christian religion an influence unfavourable to their present religious teachers, through whose exertions this change has taken place, the name of his Majesty's Government had been used; and even that intimation had been made of an intention to compel them to come under the Church of England. The great and surprising changes which have occurred within a short period of time in the character and condition of large bodies of the Mississagua Indians is well known. From a state of vice and ignorance, wretchedness and degradation almost brutal, they have been brought to habits of industry, order, and temperance, a thirst for instruction and know-

ledge, a profession of the Christian religion, and apparently a cordial and humble belief of its truths and enjoyment of its blessings. In this change the Methodists have been chiefly instrumental. They have manifested the most benevolent zeal in accomplishing it; they have sent missionaries and established schools among them which are supported by voluntary contributions, and they are still labouring among them with the same disinterested spirit and the same surprising encouragement and success."

The report of the committee then deals with the question of the Clergy Reserves. A statute had recently been passed by the Imperial Parliament authorising the sale of a part of the reserves, but it was not yet known how the proceeds would be applied. The Upper Canada House of Assembly had already expressed its opinion against devoting the proceeds to the purposes originally intended, and in favour of devoting them to purposes of education. The committee now advanced the further opinion that the fund should be placed at the disposal of the Provincial Legislature for the purpose last mentioned.

The Charter of the University of King's College next engaged the attention of the committee. In the report the main provisions of the charter are recited, and attention is called to the sectarian character and tendency of the institution. In a pamphlet published in London by Dr. Strachan, entitled *An Appeal to the Friends of Religion and Literature, in behalf of the University of Upper Canada*, he states distinctly that it would be essentially a missionary college, "for the education of missionaries of the Church of England," and "as an

argument," says the report, "to obtain from the members of the Church contributions towards the funds of the college, maintains that the effect of establishing this university will be ultimately to make the greater portion of the population of the province members of the Church of England." It was clearly recognised by the committee that a university adapted to the character and circumstances of the people would confer untold benefits upon the province; "but," it is added, "to be of real service, the principles upon which it is established must be in unison with the general sentiments of the people. It should not be a school of politics or of sectarian views. It should have about it no appearance of a spirit of partiality or exclusiveness. Its portals should be thrown open to all, and upon none who enter should any influence be exerted to attach them to a particular creed or church. . . . Such an institution would be a blessing to the country, its pride and glory."

The report having been adopted by the House by a majority of more than two to one, an address to the King, based upon the report, was submitted, and adopted by a similar majority. After referring to Dr. Strachan's ecclesiastical chart and letter, the address proceeds:

"We beg leave to inform your Majesty that of your Majesty's subjects in this province only a small proportion are members of the Church of England; that there is not any peculiar tendency to that Church among the people, and that nothing could cause more alarm and grief in their minds than the apprehension that there was a design on the part of your Majesty's Government to establish, as a part of the State, one or more church or denomination of

Christians in this province, with rights and endowments not granted to your Majesty's subjects in general of other denominations, who are equally conscientious and deserving, and equally loyal and attached to your Majesty's person and Government. In following honestly the dictates of their conscience, as regards the great and important subject of religion, the latter have never been conscious that they have violated any law or any obligation of a good subject, or done anything to forfeit your Majesty's favour and protection, or to exclude themselves from a participation in the rights and privileges enjoyed by your Majesty's other subjects.

"We humbly beg leave to assure your Majesty that the insinuations against the Methodist preachers in this province do much injustice to a body of pious and deserving men, who justly enjoy the confidence and are the spiritual instructors of a large portion of your Majesty's subjects in this province. We are convinced that the tendency of their influence and instruction is not hostile to our institutions, but, on the contrary, is eminently favourable to religion and morality; that their labours are calculated to make the people better men and better subjects, and have already produced in the province the happiest results."

The remainder of the address refers to the Clergy Reserves, and the application of the proceeds arising from their sale.

Of the immediate effect of the report and address upon the British Government it is unnecessary to speak at present. It may be mentioned, however, that in the British House of Commons in 1831, in answer to a question put by

Mr. Labouchere (afterwards Lord Taunton) whether ministers intended to continue parliamentary grants to support Episcopal clergy in Canada, and whether they intended to apply themselves to the subject of the Clergy Reserves, the Chancellor of the Exchequer observed that "ministers did not defend this vote upon principle. The point, the committee was aware, was one of considerable difficulty, as it involved the whole question of the church establishment in Canada; it was therefore impossible to take any step rapidly; but it did appear to him that it was not fitting that the people of England should be called upon to provide funds for the support of the clergy and church establishment of Canada. It was the intention of ministers gradually to reduce the grant, and to abolish it as soon as possible. The Clergy Reserves were highly detrimental to the prosperity of the colony, but he could give no pledge on the subject, which was one of great difficulty." From all this it may be inferred that the Home Government saw that the whole question of Church Establishment and Clergy Reserves must be dealt with in the not distant future, and desired to find some way of retiring with dignity from a position that was no longer tenable. In Upper Canada the effect of the report and address were far more marked and decisive. The controversy was by no means settled, it was only fully opened; but the whole question was brought within the sphere of practical politics, and the people had taken a step through their Legislature from which they would never recede. In successive Parliaments, resolutions, addresses, and Acts against the sectarian character of King's College Charter were passed; but the will of the Popular Assembly was thwarted

by the Legislative Council, and fifteen years elapsed before King's College was transformed into a provincial institution under the title of Toronto University.

The controversy respecting the Clergy Reserves was much more protracted, and nearly a quarter of a century elapsed before the last vestiges of State-Churchism disappeared from the Statute Book. In 1835 public feeling was intensified by one of the last official acts of Sir John Colborne, who, before leaving Canada, "erected *fifty-seven* rectories of the Church of England, and endowed them with glebe lands out of the Clergy Reserves."[1] It should be clearly understood, however, that this was not a controversy between Methodists on the one hand and the Church of England on the other. It was a struggle in which the whole population was engaged, and the prominence which Methodism obtained was due to the fact that from the ranks of its ministry came by far the ablest champion of the rights of the people and the equality of the churches. At the same time, it was well known that the Methodists, ministers and people, were almost a unit in their opposition to an endowed State Church, and this identified them, in popular estimation, with the Reform party that was battling for responsible government, and incidentally against State-Churchism and the Clergy Reserves as obstacles which lay in its way.

So long as the Reform party pursued its ends by constitutional means, it carried with it the sympathy of a large proportion of the population; and had it not been for the persistent obstruction of the Legislative Council,

[1] *Epochs of Methodism*, p. 220.

the House of Assembly would have brought about the desired changes in a peaceable and orderly manner. But the stubborn resistance offered by the irresponsible branch of the Legislature to necessary reforms exasperated the temper of the people, and gave an opportunity to a few rash, hot-headed men to precipitate a struggle with the Executive in a mad endeavour to secure by revolution what they had failed to accomplish by milder methods. Foremost among these was William Lyon Mackenzie, a Scotchman, who came to Upper Canada in his twenty-fifth year, and after a varied experience as a storekeeper in several places, came to York, where he seemed to find his true vocation as a journalist. In 1826 he established the *Colonial Advocate*, and for more than a decade was the "stormy petrel" of Canadian politics. Wherever he went a storm was sure to follow. For ferreting out abuses he had no equal; and this, coupled with his pungent and irritating style of editorial criticism, made him the *bête noire* of the Government and its supporters. As a champion of popular rights he obtained wide influence, and was soon returned to the Assembly as Reform member for the county of York; but as a leader he was rash, impulsive, and unsafe. In the House he was continually unearthing abuses, while outside of it "he traversed the country, held public meetings, and circulated petitions to the throne, which were signed by more than twenty thousand persons, praying for the secularisation of the Clergy Reserves, for law reform, for the exclusion of judges and the clergy from Parliament, for the abolition of primogeniture, for the legislative control of public moneys, and for other reforms which have long since become the law

of the land."[1] Again and again Mackenzie was expelled from the House for assumed breach of parliamentary privilege, and as often was triumphantly returned again by his constituents.

When Egerton Ryerson visited England in 1833 as representative of the Canadian Conference, he was the bearer of a petition to the King, signed by upwards of twenty thousand persons, against the Clergy Reserve monopoly and the establishment of a dominant church in Upper Canada. He visited England again in 1836–37 seeking aid and a Royal Charter for Victoria University. On this occasion he was astounded by a prevalent impression among public men that the people of Canada were going to set up a republican government and separate from England. He indignantly denied the statement, but further inquiry revealed the fact that for some time correspondence had been proceeding between William Lyon Mackenzie and Joseph Papineau of Canada, and Messrs. Hume and Roebuck, of the British Parliament, with this very end in view. Mr. Ryerson at once addressed six letters to Hume and Roebuck, through the *Times* newspaper, over the signature of "A Canadian," showing that they were the originators and advisers of the change from reform to revolution in Canada, and for throwing off what Mr. Hume called "the baneful domination of the Mother Country," and for establishing a republic in Canada.

After his return to Canada in 1833, Mr. Ryerson published in the *Christian Guardian*, of which he had again been elected editor, a series of articles giving his

[1] Withrow's *Abridged History of Canada*, p. 107.

impressions in regard to public men, religious bodies, and the general state of the nation. These "impressions" gave huge offence to the Mackenzie-Papineau section of the Reform party. The former clearly perceived what would be the probable effect on the public mind of such outspoken criticisms, and he proceeded to attack the writer with that unscrupulous and bitter invective in the use of which he was a past master. Other papers of the extreme radical type took up the cry, until the whole vocabulary of abuse seemed to be exhausted in denouncing a man who sought to give a faithful picture of men and parties as he saw them in England. The sting of the "impressions" was in this, that if the author was right, then the revolutionary wing of the Reform party in Upper Canada was wrong, and would have to retrace its steps, or else incur a tremendous responsibility. For a time these attacks had their effect. Feelings of deep resentment were excited in many quarters, and some who had been Mr. Ryerson's warmest friends turned against him. Even his own brothers seemed to think he had made a mistake. The Rev. John Ryerson, in a letter written about this time, said:

"What will be the result of your remarks in the *Guardian* on political parties in England, I cannot say. They will occasion much speculation, some jealousy, and bad feeling. I have sometimes thought you had better not have written them, particularly at this time, yet I have long been of the opinion (both with regard to measures and men) that we leaned too much toward radicalism, and that it would be absolutely necessary to disengage ourselves from them entirely. You can see

plainly it is not reform but revolution they are after. . . . There are some things in your remarks I don't like; but, on the whole, I am glad of their appearance, and I hope, whenever you have occasion to speak of the Government, you will do it in terms of respect. I am anxious that we should obtain the confidence of the Government, and entirely disconnect ourselves from that tribe of levellers with whom we have been too intimate, and who are, at any time, ready to turn around and sell us when we fail to please them."

As time went on it became apparent there would be a division in the Reform party, and this increased the rage of the revolutionary element. The controversy developed their plans perhaps more rapidly than they intended, and Mackenzie began to utter sentiments which could only be interpreted as encouraging armed resistance to the Government. The object, doubtless, was so to commit the Reform party to his revolutionary policy that they would find it impossible to recede. The only thing to be regretted is that the more moderate leaders did not at once repudiate Mackenzie's treasonable sentiments and cut loose from his dangerous designs. Perhaps they thought his violent utterances were but the outcome of temporary excitement, and would not lead to any overt act; but Egerton Ryerson clearly perceived that the trend of events, unless promptly checked, must inevitably end in revolution, whether so intended or not, and lifted up his voice in timely warning against the mad attempt. For this he was assailed with torrents of abuse. He was denounced as traitor, renegade, and arch-apostate, as one who had abandoned friends and principles and gone over to the camp of the enemy.

Nothing could be more unjust. The fact is, that from first to last Egerton Ryerson was the uncompromising advocate of great principles, but never the slave of a party; and hence he did not hesitate to oppose those with whom he had formerly co-operated when convinced that they had adopted an unwise policy, or had abandoned principle for expediency. The storm which had been raised by the "impressions" gradually subsided. Before the crisis came the Methodist people and many others saw that Ryerson was right, and it was subsequently his proud boast that not a single member of the Methodist Church was implicated in the rebellion of 1837–38.

It is unnecessary to follow in detail the history of the next few years. The ill-starred rebellion was quickly suppressed. Some of the leaders escaped, and some were sent to the gallows—a most impolitic act, but not suprising in view of the excited state of public feeling. Only a small section of the Reform party actually participated in the uprising; but all had to bear the odium caused by the rashness of a few, and for a time the party was practically extinct. It was only after the coming of Lord Durham, and the publication of his masterly and statesman-like report on Canadian affairs, that the tide of feeling fairly turned. The cause of popular rights had been retarded, but could not be permanently turned back—it was too deeply imbedded in the convictions and aspirations of the people to admit of that; but years elapsed before the controversy was fully ended, and it could be affirmed, without a shadow of reservation, that the great battle of civil and religious liberty had been fought and won.

Calmly surveying, after the lapse of more than half

a century, the events of those troublous times, Methodism has no occasion to blush for the part she played. While her ministers carefully abstained from interference in party politics, and never alluded to such questions in public address or sermon, they were known, for the most part, as staunch adherents of the demand for responsible government, and uncompromising opponents of a dominant State Church. The membership, as a rule, co-operated, in public affairs, with the Reform party, for that was the party which championed the popular cause; but when they saw that a section of the party were abandoning reform for revolution, they did not hesitate to oppose their former associates, and even to take up arms in defence of law and order. And when strife subsided, and the smoke of battle cleared away, it was clearly seen by all reasonable men that, alike by its spiritual ministrations and its attitude on great public questions, Methodism had rendered service of unspeakable value, and had fairly earned the respect and gratitude of the whole country. No longer treated as a despised sect, no longer overshadowed and brow-beaten by a haughty ecclesiastical establishment, Methodism took its stand on terms of equality with other denominations, and by virtue of its numbers, intelligence, and active support of whatever made for the weal of the people, it was henceforth regarded as a force to be reckoned with in the conduct of public affairs.

V

UNION WITH THE BRITISH CONFERENCE DISSOLVED AND RESTORED

HAVING given some account of the causes which led to the union between the British and Canadian Conferences in 1833 (pp. 142–179), it now becomes necessary to recall the circumstances which led to a dissolution of that union in 1840, and to its restoration in 1847; for these occurrences were not unimportant links in the chain of events which combined to make the Methodist Church in Canada what it is to-day. Previous to 1833 the trend of affairs was such as necessitated a union of forces if Methodism was to be saved from complications that would have retarded its progress for years. Two Methodist bodies—the British Wesleyan missionaries and the Methodist Episcopal Church—were working in the same field among a sparse population. For a time the understanding formerly reached with the General Conference in the United States, that the British Wesleyan Committee should confine its labours to Lower Canada, was observed; but when the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada became an independent body, free from the control of the American General Conference, the British brethren considered that the original compact was no longer binding, and that they were now at liberty

to send missionaries into any part of the country where their services might be desired. As a result of this, missionaries of the British Conference were sent into Upper Canada. In some cases preachers of both Connexions were appointed to the same stations, and thus altar was set up against altar, societies were divided, and the preachers were placed, by force of circumstances, in a position of antagonism to each other which could not fail to be prejudicial to the interests of true religion.

When the union was consummated the whole situation seemed to be changed for the better. It would be incorrect to say that everybody was pleased; but those who would have preferred to maintain their former connexion with the British Missionary Committee were willing, for the sake of peace, and in the interests of the work, to accept the new arrangement; and those who were strongly attached to the Methodist Episcopal Church, under whose ministry they had been converted and in connexion with which they had laboured, resolved to forego their preferences for the sake of what seemed a greater good. It may be that even the leaders in the movement did not realise how diverse and conflicting were some of the elements they were trying to unite. At that time so little was known about Canada in the Mother Country that it was practically impossible for Englishmen to see questions from a Canadian point of view, and it was just as impossible for those who had grown up in the unconventional atmosphere of a new colony, where everything, from the rights of the humblest subject to the prerogatives of the Crown, was discussed with the utmost freedom, to understand the conservatism of English opinion or its deference to prerogative and

vested rights. Years of misunderstanding and conflict elapsed before these initial difficulties were surmounted, and the two parties learned to adjust themselves to each other and to existing conditions.

In effecting the union certain changes in the discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada were rendered necessary to meet the new order of things. There was, first of all, a partial change of name. That which had been known as "The *Episcopal* Methodist Church in *Canada*," now became "The *Wesleyan* Methodist Church in *British North America*." Then the designation of the presiding officer was changed from "bishop" to "president," and the office, instead of being for life, was made annual; but no change was made in the functions of the officer referred to. In the ministry the term "elder" was changed to "superintendent," and the ordination of deacons was dispensed with. It was also understood that, from the time of the union, the practice of ordaining local preachers should be discontinued. In regard to this latter point it should be observed that in 1834 the new rules respecting local preachers were submitted to the whole Church and ratified by more than three fourths of the quarterly official meetings of the Connexion. At the Hallowell Conference in 1832, when a union with the English Conference was proposed, and at the York Conference in 1833, where it was ratified, there were some ministers who, on various grounds, were opposed to the scheme, but when it was carried by the requisite constitutional majorities they readily acquiesced, and gave their best aid to make the union a success. Among the membership of the Church there seemed to be almost entire unanimity, and

with one exception no memorial or protest against the union was heard from any quarter. The exception consisted of a few local preachers who assembled in the Trafalgar meeting-house, 6th July 1832, and adopted the following resolution: "*Resolved*—That as it appears from the *Christian Guardian* that a union between the missionaries from Britain and our Church is contemplated, we address our Annual Conference on the subject of our privileges as local preachers, and that Brothers Picket, Culp, and Brown be the committee to draft such address and forward it for presentation." At the Conference of 1834, a year after the union was consummated, some amendments to the regulations respecting local preachers were adopted. By these amendments local preachers' Conferences were discontinued, and also the practice of ordaining local preachers. These two changes caused some alarm and even resentment. A convention was called at Belleville late in the autumn of 1834, which is said to have been attended by twelve or fifteen persons, when resolutions were adopted condemning the "local preachers' resolutions," and also disapproving of the union with the British Conference. During the following spring or early summer a few persons met to reorganise on the old Episcopal plan, and to form a General Conference. This action was greatly to be deplored, for it resulted in a "schism in the body" that was not healed for nearly fifty years. The conflict that followed developed all the bitterness of a family quarrel, which grew more intense as the years went by, and was eagerly seized upon by politicians as a means of discrediting and weakening the Methodist Church. Certain political papers teemed with bitter articles on the tyranny, despotism, political

depravity, and religious apostasy of Wesleyan Methodism. But, happily, all this belongs to a bygone day. The breach which began in the division of 1834 was healed by the union of 1883, and there we leave the story of the unhappy strife. Peace and brotherhood are reigning now. "Let the dead past bury its dead."

It would have been a happy thing for Methodism had the division just referred to been the only one; but another was to follow in the course of a few years which was in some respects more deplorable than the first. Besides the ostensible causes of the rupture, there were other influences equally potent though less manifest. The union which had been effected in 1833 was distasteful to various party politicians. The dominant party in the Legislative Council may have favoured it, for although their favourite policy was to foment discord and disunion in the Methodist Church, they may have seen in this union something which they fondly hoped would neutralise the efforts of the Canada Conference for the secularisation of the Clergy Reserves and to prevent the recognition of a State Church; but the radical element in the Liberal party disliked a union which meant resolute opposition to revolutionary schemes; while even the constitutional Reformers regarded it with some degree of suspicion. Moreover, the union held within itself elements that were not easily fused into one. The English missionaries had been brought up under conditions very different from those in which the Canadian preachers had received their training. They were more conservative in their methods, more disposed to defer to "the powers that be," whether right or wrong, and perhaps were not altogether free from that spirit of lofty

condescension with which Englishmen of that period—and some later periods—were wont to regard "mere colonials." The Canadian preachers, on the other hand, had grown up with the country from its very beginning. They were of the people and knew the people, had shared their struggles and sympathised with their aspirations, and in common with the people were imbued with an intense dislike of irresponsible or autocratic authority in Church or State. All this may have rendered them impatient of anything that savoured of dictation, and almost too ready to assert the right of self-government. But it should be remembered that all they possessed of civil or religious liberty had been won after bitter and protracted struggles, and was prized accordingly. Above all, it should be remembered that at the time of which we speak public opinion on many questions, civil and religious, was at fever heat; men's minds were so sensitive that grievances which in a time of profound peace would have seemed very trifling loomed up in large proportions in the heated atmosphere of political excitement and controversy.

The events which led ultimately to a dissolution of the union between the British and Canadian Conferences had their origin in the revival of the Clergy Reserves dispute. For some years after the union the British Conference and English missionaries co-operated with the Canadian Conference and the *Christian Guardian* in the demand for equal rights before the law for all creeds and classes, and the secularisation of the Clergy Reserves; but the insurrection of 1837, and the bitter agitation which preceded and grew out of it, resulted in a change of attitude. The Family Compact (which really meant Archdeacon Strachan

and his supporters in the Legislative Council) made all possible capital out of the rebellion, by affirming that the whole trouble had grown out of the opposition of the pretended advocates of equal rights and privileges to the British Constitution and Government. In these efforts the dominant party was seconded by the new Governor, Sir George Arthur, and it is not surprising that their representations had considerable effect, especially in England. The Wesleyan Missionary Committee in London, looking on from a great distance, and receiving their impressions, to a large extent, from the communications of bitter enemies of reform, could hardly be expected to understand the situation or to comprehend the intense desire of the victims of oppression and misrule for deliverance from the burdens under which they were groaning. It might have been supposed that the English missionaries in Canada would have understood the true position of affairs; but these men had been spectators of a battle rather than participants in it; their courage had not been tested or their muscles hardened on the field of conflict, and when the rebellion was suppressed they may have thought that the cause of reform was hopelessly lost, and that there was no use in contending against fate. Be that as it may, signs began to appear which indicated that the bond of union between the two Connexions was weakening, and that at no distant day the old line of cleavage would reappear.

When the editor of the *Guardian* perceived that the policy of William Lyon Mackenzie and his followers meant sedition, he unhesitatingly took his stand on the side of law and order—of constitutional reforms by constitutional

means—and against the schemes of the revolutionists. By this change of attitude (for so it seemed to the extremists) he incurred the bitter hostility of the radical element, lost for a time the confidence and friendship of many of the more moderate reformers, and did not lessen by one jot the rancour and bitterness of the Government and their friends. Any man of less nerve and tenacity of purpose in pursuing what he believed to be the right would have quailed before the storm he had raised; but not so Egerton Ryerson. Though his life was in danger, he steadily held on his way, and was most courageous in darkest days. When the heat of the rebellion had cooled a little, the *Guardian*, of which Mr. Ryerson had again been elected editor, resumed the discussion of the Clergy Reserves question, as though the rebellion had only been a trifling incident which had temporarily delayed but could not prevent a final settlement. This, to the opponents of popular rights, was utterly beyond endurance. The furnace of their indignation was heated seven times hotter than its wont, and the editor of the *Guardian* was threatened with personal violence, with persecution, with banishment. But, undeterred by threats, as at other times he had been undeterred by flattery, Egerton Ryerson stood firm, and redoubled his exertions to defeat the monopolists. Finding other means ineffectual, Sir George Arthur wrote to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee in London, complaining of the course of the *Guardian* and calling upon the committee to interpose. Such a communication, virtually asking the committee to undertake something which the Canadian Government were unable to accomplish, could not be otherwise than flattering; and

as there was a perfectly natural wish to stand well with the Government, the committee sent what was regarded as a complimentary and encouraging reply. They also wrote to the Rev. William M. Harvard, President of Conference, Joseph Stinson, Superintendent of Missions, and Matthew Richey, Principal of Upper Canada Academy, to interfere in arresting what was regarded as the unjustifiable course of the *Guardian* and its editor. The three brethren referred to were men of high repute and conspicuous ability, but, with the exception of Mr. Stinson, they were new in the province, and hardly capable, on such short acquaintance, of taking in all the bearings of the case. The alleged ground of complaint was not that the *Guardian* discussed the Clergy Reserves question, but that it had become a political paper, discussing party questions and committing itself to party issues. That there were some grounds for this view cannot be denied. Both John and Egerton Ryerson have admitted that the *Guardian*, at this period, was intensely political for a religious paper, and many of its best friends thought it ought to modify its course in that respect.[1] But was there not a cause? The reform party had been utterly crushed by the rebellion, and the reform press was silenced. The dominant party now considered themselves secure in the possession of unquestioned irresponsible power, and how they would use it there was only too much reason to fear. At this crisis Egerton Ryerson was practically the one surviving champion of civil liberty and religious equality in Upper Canada, and knowing that he was backed by all his Canadian brethren who had re-elected him to the

[1] *Epochs of Methodism*, p. 314 and footnote.

editorial chair of the *Guardian* on this very issue, "he determined to defend to the last the citadel of Canadian liberty, by whomsoever or from whatsoever quarter assailed."[1] He contended "that all political questions then pending had a direct or indirect bearing on the great question; that in warfare belligerents were not expected to be exceedingly nice in regard to the instruments they employed in making a breach into the enemy's camp and pulling down his bulwarks; that he employed no illegitimate means, but that he would not be turned aside from the great object until it was attained; that the real object of the Government and the London Missionary Committee was not so much to prevent the introduction of politics into the *Guardian* as the discussion of the Clergy Reserves question itself, and the equal religious rights of the people altogether, so that the High Church party might be left in peaceable possession of their exclusive privileges, and their unjust and immense monopolies, without molestation or dispute."[2] It is probable that in this matter Mr. Ryerson judged too harshly. Doubtless the object of the Church party was correctly stated; but it is not at all likely that the Missionary Committee, as a whole, was swayed by any such considerations, whatever may have been true of one or two individual members. All that can be said is that the committee were not cognisant of the real facts in the case; they relied upon *ex parte* statements, and were misled accordingly.

Further, letters and verbal communications between the Government and the London Committee did not serve

[1] *Epochs of Methodism*, p. 314, footnote.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 315, 316.

to lessen the tension but rather increased it, and in 1839 the Rev. Robert Alder was sent to Canada, ostensibly to ascertain the state of affairs and parties and if possible adjust matters upon a satisfactory basis. Shortly after his arrival a strong pamphlet appeared over the signatures of Rev. J. Stinson and M. Richey, giving a statement, from their point of view, of the facts in the case. To this pamphlet the editor of the *Guardian* prepared a reply, and also to a letter from the Rev. Dr. Alder, which was published when the Conference assembled. Another element in the controversy was introduced by a letter brought by Dr. Alder from the British Secretaries to Sir George Arthur, eulogising his Government and condemning the editor of the *Guardian.* The letter was promptly published in the *Patriot*, the organ of the Government, and was as promptly copied into the *Guardian* and replied to by the editor. This led to further letters from Dr. Alder in defence of the committee, and further replies from Mr. Ryerson. The Conference assembled at Hamilton under the presidency of the Rev. Joseph Stinson. Dr. Alder was present and introduced resolutions supposed to express the views of the British Missionary Committee, which were discussed for the greater part of three days. After Mr. Ryerson had been heard in reply a vote was taken, and the resolutions were rejected by fifty-five to five. Subsequently Mr. Ryerson was re-elected editor of the *Guardian* by an almost unanimous vote.

At the same Conference Dr. Alder represented that certain resolutions adopted by the Conference in June 1837, on the subject of certain grants made by his late Majesty to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee out of

the Casual and Territorial Revenue, especially the second, fifth, and sixth, interfered with the usages of the English brethren and materially retarded their interests. The Conference agreed, in the interests of peace, and to avoid disturbing the union, to rescind the objectionable clauses. The rescinding of these resolutions had no particular effect upon the general question one way or the other, but as it was desired by Dr. Alder, and was understood to remove some embarrassments out of the way of the Missionary Committee in London, it was done. Another resolution of the series, still remaining on the Journals of the Conference, shows conclusively that the opinion of the Connexion in regard to the Clergy Reserves remained unchanged. It reads as follows :

"7. That it is the strong conviction and deliberate judgment of this Conference that the interests of religion, the stability of the Government, and the welfare of the province requires the earliest possible settlement of the long-agitated Clergy Reserves question, in accordance with the wishes and circumstances of the inhabitants ; and that those interests have been very seriously sacrificed by the delays which have attended the proposed adjustment of that question, so frequently urged upon the attention of the Provincial Legislature by the Imperial Government."

In a conversation with Dr. Alder, after the close of the Conference, the editor of the *Guardian* pointed out that he (Dr. Alder) had entirely mistaken the state of Canadian feeling and the views of the Methodist Connexion ; but in order to avoid even the appearance of discounting the British representative, an editorial would be published in the *Guardian* to the effect that the

differences and misunderstandings which had arisen between the London Wesleyan Committee and the Canadian Conference had been adjusted in an amicable spirit, and the unity of the Church maintained inviolate. Dr. Alder gladly accepted the suggestion; but on his return to England, he used the editorial in his report as a proof that the Canadian Conference and the editor of the *Guardian* had acceded to all his demands, and that his mission had been entirely successful, when in point of fact nothing had been conceded save the rescinding of three out of eleven resolutions adopted in 1837, which did not affect the main question. Dr. Alder's resolutions, as before pointed out, were sustained by only five votes in a Conference of sixty members.

In the meantime, a new element had been introduced into public affairs by the appointment of the Earl of Durham as Governor-General of the two Canadas and High Commissioner for the settlement of public affairs, and by the superseding of Sir George Arthur and the appointment of the Right Hon. Poulett Thompson (afterwards Lord Sydenham) as Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. The Constitution of Lower Canada had been suspended by the Home Government, and the Governor and his Council were supreme; but Lord Durham was a nobleman of exceptional character and ability, educated in a liberal school, and one who could be trusted to deal with public affairs in a just and impartial manner. On assuming office he announced himself as the friend and arbitrator of the people without distinction of party, race, or creed, and nobly did he fulfil his pledge. He appointed a commission to inquire into the state of the country, and many

grievances were redressed. An amnesty was granted to most of the rebel prisoners, and proclaimed on the day of the Coronation of Queen Victoria. Unwilling to appeal to the decision of a court-martial, whose sentences would doubtless have been very severe, the Governor banished Wolfred Nelson and eight other leading insurgents to Bermuda, and forbade Papineau and other fugitives to return to the country under penalty of death. The Home Government annulled this action as *ultra vires,* whereupon the Governor at once resigned his commission and returned to England, discouraged and dispirited, with broken health.[1] The loss to the country was irreparable. His quick comprehension of the real situation and his far-seeing statesmanship, both of which were clearly indicated in his elaborate and impartial report on Canadian affairs, would have enabled him to deal wisely and effectively with grave complications, and would have saved the country years of political turmoil and acrimonious debate.

Although the English missionaries were not favourable to a policy that turned the *Christian Guardian* into a political sheet rather than a religious newspaper, they seem to have held pronounced views on the Clergy Reserves question and the claims of the Church of England. I infer this from a letter addressed by the Rev. Joseph Stinson to the Rev. John Ryerson in April 1838, shortly before the Conference at which Egerton Ryerson was re-elected editor. That letter contained the following passage:

"I am quite of your opinion that Brother Egerton (Ryerson) ought to take the *Guardian* next year. There

[1] Withrow's *Abridged History of Canada*, pp. 110, 111.

is a crisis approaching in our affairs which will require a vigorous hand to wield the defensive weapon of our Conference. There can be no two opinions as to whom to give that weapon. We now stand on fair grounds to maintain our own against the encroachments of the oligarchy, and we must do it or sink into a comparatively uninfluential body. This must not be."

It seems to be clearly established that in 1838 Messrs. Stinson and Richey both voted for Mr. Ryerson as editor; nor can it be said they did so in ignorance of the latter's views or his intentions for the future. Previous to his election, Mr. Ryerson clearly stated the course he intended to pursue in regard to both civil and religious affairs, and subsequently embodied his remarks in an editorial prospectus, to which neither the Church in Canada nor the committee in London took any exception. But when the policy thus enunciated began to develop, and the dominant party felt the force of the *Guardian's* onslaught, strong pressure was brought to bear, first upon the committee in London, and subsequently upon the English missionaries in Canada. It was then that the letter of the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir George Arthur, was sent to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee, complaining of Mr. Ryerson's course and requesting their interference, and it was then that the views of the English missionaries underwent a change. It is true that in the preceding January (1838) a meeting of several leading ministers was held (at the call and under the presidency of the Rev. William M. Harvard, at that time President of the Conference), and that meeting pronounced in favour of a distribution of the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves among the different

Protestant denominations; but the Conference had pronounced in favour of the appropriation of the Reserves to educational purposes, and for that the *Guardian* contended. But should the other course be taken, it was argued that the share that might fall to the Methodist Church should be utilised in two ways: (1) For educational purposes; and (2) to assist in the erection of churches and parsonages; but not a penny to be for the endowment of the clergy in any way.

In the editorial prospectus already referred to, a paragraph occurs which so clearly defines Mr. Ryerson's attitude, and the attitude of the entire body of Canadian preachers, that I quote it in full:

"The present is an epoch in the affairs of this province in which no man of intelligence or consideration can be safely or justifiably neutral. The foundation of our government is being laid anew; the future character and relations and destinies of the country are involved in pending deliberations; the last whisper of rebellion is to be silenced in the land. My decision, however, is not one of party, but of principle; not one of passion, but one of conviction; not of partial prescription, but of equitable comprehensiveness. To be explicit as well as brief, I am opposed to the introduction of any new and untried theories of government. As the organ of the Methodist Church, I assume that the doctrines and discipline are true and right. I take them for granted, as far as the members of that Church are concerned, and expound and recommend and act upon them accordingly. So in civil affairs I assume that this country is to remain a portion of the British Empire, and view every measure not in reference to any

abstract political theory, however plausible that theory may be, but in reference to the well-being of the country in connexion with Great Britain. As in church affairs I take my stand upon the constitution of the Church, in its doctrines and rules, as expounded by its fathers and ablest theologians and illustrated by general usage, so in civil affairs I take my stand upon the established constitution of the country, as expounded by royal despatches and illustrated by the usages of the British Parliament, British Courts of Justice, and the common law of England."

In 1838, as already noted, the Rev. Joseph Stinson strongly supported the election of the Rev. Egerton Ryerson as editor of the *Guardian*, under the conviction that he was the only man available who could successfully oppose the "oligarchy" and defend the character and just claims of the Methodist Church. But after the visit of Dr. Alder to Canada in 1839, and as a result of correspondence with the Wesleyan Missionary Committee in London, Mr. Stinson assumed a different attitude toward Mr. Ryerson and the great questions on which the Canadian preachers were practically a unit. In a letter addressed to the Governor-General, the Right Hon. Poulett Thompson, in January 1840, and signed by "J. Stinson, President of the Conference, and M. Richey, Superintendent of Toronto City," the following passages occur:

"The Church of England being, in our estimation, the Established Church of all the British Colonies, we entertain no objection to the distinct recognition of her as such; and had the Reserves been exclusively appropriated to her, according to the original intention of

his gracious Majesty George Third, we should not have interfered with this matter; but as the disposition of them has been referred to the Colonial Legislature, we confess we are at a loss to conceive any just reason why the Wesleyan Methodist Church should be placed in a position in any degree inferior to the Church of Scotland. . . . In any settlement of this important question that may be made, we regard it as of vital importance to the permanent peace and prosperity of the province, as a British colony, that the sum to be appropriated to us be given to the Wesleyan Methodists who are now, or who may be hereafter, connected with the British Wesleyan Conference."

That Mr. Stinson, in his private capacity, had a perfect right to his opinions on the Clergy Reserves, or any other question, no one will dispute; but that, in his official capacity, he should have expressed sentiments so utterly at variance with those of the Conference of which he was the head, seems to indicate an imperfect conception of official responsibility and duty. At this time the dissolution of the union with the British Conference was almost a foregone conclusion in the minds of the London Committee, whose representatives were preparing to assert their claim not only to the annual grant from Casual and Territorial Revenue, but also to that share of the Clergy Reserves that might fall to the Methodist Church, should the Government decide to divide the proceeds among the denominations. It is much to be regretted that the money question should have formed so important a factor in the discussions of the period, and that the great principles involved in the Clergy Reserves question, and the recognition of a dominant

State Church, should have been almost lost sight of in the scramble for the loaves and fishes.

When the Conference of 1839 adjourned, the members were full of hope that peace would now reign between the Conference and the British Committee; but their hopes were doomed to disappointment. Signs of division began to appear. Some were strong in the opinion that the question of the Clergy Reserves should no longer be discussed in the *Guardian*, while others were equally pronounced in affirming that it ought to be discussed until a righteous settlement was reached. This continued, more or less, until the Conference of 1840, when a communication from England was read containing serious charges against the Rev. Egerton Ryerson. These charges may be summarised as follows: (1) That he had practically superseded the Rev. Joseph Stinson, representative of the Wesleyan body, in communicating with the Governor-General. (2) That he had shown a want of integrity and ingenuousness in attempting to gain possession, on behalf of the Canadian Conference, of the grant made by the Crown to the Wesleyan Missionary Society. (3) That the *Christian Guardian*, instead of being conducted as a religious paper, had become more than ever a political and party organ. (4) The committee express the hope that the Canada Conference will utterly repudiate Mr. Ryerson's unjustifiable proceedings at their next annual sitting, and that the *Guardian*, if continued at all, shall be exclusively a religious publication. (5) But if this reasonable expectation should be disappointed, the committee will "recommend to the next British Conference to dissolve the union which at present subsists between the two

Connexions, and to adopt such measures for the maintenance and extension of the Indian missions in Upper Canada as may appear to be necessary."

The issue thus raised was sufficiently distinct, and was further emphasised, after the Conference assembled, by the following resolution, moved by the Rev. Matthew Richey, who prosecuted the charges on behalf of the British Committee, and seconded by the Rev. Ephraim Evans:

"Resolved—That this Conference has heard, with great surprise and regret, of brother Egerton Ryerson's attempt to deprive the British Wesleyan Committee of the annual grant received by them from the Imperial Government, to enable them to extend their missions in this province; and that they utterly repudiate such proceedings on the part of Mr. Ryerson, not only as irregular and unauthorised, but directly opposed to a resolution adopted by this Conference at its last session, rescinding the second, fifth, and sixth passed by this Conference in June 1837, on the subject of the grants in question, because those resolutions were represented by Mr. Alder as interfering with the usages of the British brethren, and calculated materially to retard their interests."

Before beginning his defence, Mr. Ryerson insisted that the memorial of Rev. Messrs. Stinson and Richey to the Governor-General be read, as the Conference, up to that moment, were not aware of its existence. At the conclusion of Mr. Ryerson's address considerable discussion followed, after which a vote was taken on Mr. Richey's resolution, and it was negatived by a majority of fifty-one in a Conference of sixty members. Without advancing

any opinion on the merits of the dispute, one cannot but feel surprised that, in view of the well understood opinions and feelings of the Conference, such a resolution should have been proposed at all, and that some more pacific method of settling the dispute had not been attempted. But probably the English missionaries felt that they were under obligation to carry out the instructions of the London Committee, and that failure to do so would be interpreted as disloyalty to the parent Connexion.

The vote of censure having thus been disposed of, the Conference proceeded to deal with the resolutions of the British Missionary Committee, and reached conclusions which may be summarised as follows: (1) That we cannot recognise the right of the committee to interfere with the Canada Conference in the management of its own affairs, except as provided for by the Articles of Union. (2) That as these articles expressly secure to the Canadian preachers all their rights and privileges inviolate, it is an alarming precedent for a committee in London to accuse and condemn a member of the Conference and to enjoin upon it to carry their sentence into execution on pain of a dissolution of the union. (3) That we decline to recognise the President appointed in England as the representative of the Wesleyan body in Upper Canada in the transaction of our affairs with the Government, having always a committee or representative of our own for that purpose; and this Conference at its last session appointed the Rev. Egerton Ryerson to confer with the Government on matters affecting its civil and religious rights. (4) That it was the imperative duty of the Rev.

Egerton Ryerson to confer with the Governor-General on the financial affairs of the Conference, and we fully concur in the exposition given in his letter to the Governor-General dated 17th January 1840. (5) That as the Indian missions in Upper Canada, with two or three exceptions, were established prior to the union, and sustained chiefly by funds raised in this province, we cannot, under any circumstances, relinquish our pastoral connexion with these missions.

While thus expressing, with plainness and force, its attitude on the points in dispute, the spirit of the Conference may be understood from the last resolution of the series, which I append in full:

"(6) That firmly believing, as we do, that the resolutions of the committee in London have been adopted upon erroneous impressions; and being satisfied that our fathers and brethren in England could not have intended, nor would intend, anything unkind toward the members of this Connexion, or unjust to its interests; and deeply anxious as we are to maintain inviolate and unimpaired the principles of the Articles of Union between the British and Canadian Conferences; and being disposed to do all in our power to prevent the dissolution of the union; therefore, resolved, that a delegation be sent to the Wesleyan Conference in England to lay all the matters of these resolutions before that honourable body, and to use all proper means to prevent collision between the two Connexions."

In accordance with the foregoing resolution the Rev. Egerton and William Ryerson were chosen delegates, and by unanimous request of the Conference, the President,

Rev. Joseph Stinson, accompanied them on their fraternal mission. As a further evidence of the desire of the Canada Conference to promote the most amicable relations, and remove all causes of offence, the following resolution respecting the *Guardian* was adopted: "Resolved—That in order to prevent all disagreeable and unnecessary discussions in future on the general course of the *Christian Guardian*, the paper be confined to purely religious and literary subjects, and items of general intelligence; the Clergy Reserves question being considered a religious question as a matter of course." But however well intentioned the last two resolutions may have been, they were not sufficient to counteract the effect of the belligerent resolutions that preceded them. In the estimation of the British Conference the red flag was more in evidence than the olive branch, and when the Canadian delegates arrived in England they found themselves in a decidedly frigid atmosphere. From a few members — pre-eminently Mr. Lord, who had been President of the Canadian Conference in 1835 and 1836—they received kind attention, but by the officials and other leading members they were treated at first with studied coldness. This was all the more to be regretted in view of the fact that the Canadian Conference had been assured that its representative would be received with cordial affection by the British Conference, and that every attention would be paid to his statements and representations. That this pledge was not fulfilled was due chiefly, if not solely, to the appointment of Egerton Ryerson as representative of the Canada Conference. Whether justly or unjustly, he was regarded by the

English brethren as the chief cause of the whole difficulty, and his appointment was construed as an open defiance of their views and wishes. This explains, though it does not justify, the attitude of the Conference officials.

At this distance of time it would be unwise to revive unpleasant memories, and I shall not further refer to the details of proceedings, first before a committee, and afterward before the Conference just previous to its adjournment. Suffice it to say that the Conference re-affirmed in the most positive manner the resolutions of the committee of 1839, embodying charges against the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, declaring that these had been fully and conclusively proved. A series of resolutions were adopted, endorsing the action of the committee of 1839; expressing distrust and disapprobation of the resolution of the Canada Conference respecting the *Christian Guardian*, recognising the existence of "a decided difference between the two Conferences on the construction of the Articles of Union in reference to the fundamental principles essential to the working of the union"; endorsing the action of Rev. Messrs. Stinson and Richey; admitting the desirableness of "maintaining the existing union between the two bodies for reasons which relate to the general interests of our common Christianity, and to the continued connexion of the province with the Mother Country"; yet affirming that the union could not be advantageously maintained except by strict adherence on the part of the Canadian Conference to certain principles and regulations. These regulations embodied the following: (1) That the continuance of Government grant be cordially assented to by the Canadian

Conference, even if the payment should be transferred from the Casual and Territorial Revenue to the Clergy Reserve fund, and that "the Rev. Egerton Ryerson shall address a letter to Lord John Russell, disclaiming any intention or wish to deprive the Wesleyan Missionary Society of the grant of £700 per annum, secured as a fixed charge for missionary purposes in Upper Canada, requesting that its regular payment be continued, and assuring his lordship that any other construction which may have been put upon his letter to the Governor-General was founded in a misapprehension of his meaning." (2) That the *Christian Guardian*, or other official organ of the Canada Conference, should "abstain from all party political reasonings and discussions." (3) That such organ should "admit and maintain all the acknowledged principles of the Wesleyan Connexion." On this point the committee who framed the resolution had "special reference to that principle of our body which asserts it to be the duty of civil government to employ their influence and a portion of their resources for the support of the Christian religion."

Such resolutions, couched in language so peremptory and dictatorial, could have but one fate. On hearing the report read, the Canadian representatives gave it as their opinion "that the Canada Conference could never be induced to listen to the views therein contained, and the maintenance of such views by the British Conference would be regarded by the Canada Conference as a virtual dissolution of the union." Upon hearing this, the Conference was reluctantly led to the conviction "that a continuance of the more intimate connexion established

by the Articles of 1833 is quite impracticable."[1] And thus the union, which began under such favourable auspices, and from which so much was hoped, was broken, and an era of "civil war" introduced into the societies in Canada that wrought untold evil.

On the return of the Canadian representatives a special session of the Conference was summoned to meet in Toronto on the 22nd of October 1840. This was rendered necessary by the altered circumstances caused by the dissolution of the union. Eleven preachers withdrew from the Conference and cast in their lot with the English missionaries, and this made it necessary to rearrange the work so far as the stations were concerned. The prospects were far from encouraging. There was a scarcity both of ministers and resources, and the defection of eleven itinerants, increased to fifteen at the Conference of June 1841, was a serious blow. At this time there were nine Indian missions, six of which remained with the Conference, while three went with the British Missionary district. The Canada Conference had no missionary fund of its own, and had to face the support of six Indian and eight domestic missions without a penny in the treasury. But the issue was met with undaunted courage. Shortly after the Conference adjourned a few ministers and laymen met to consider what could be done. It was finally concluded to begin a subscription among themselves, and then to send forth the Rev. John Ryerson and Peter Jones to hold missionary meetings throughout the

[1] *Proceedings and Decisions of the (English) Conference on matters relating to the Union between the British Conference and the Upper Canada Conference*, c. pp. 75–79.

Connexion. About four months were employed in this work, and at the end of the year it was found that upwards of one third more had been contributed for missionary purposes than had ever been contributed in the province in any previous year.

But the embarrassment of insufficient resources was as nothing compared with the pain caused by depleted ranks, divided societies, and the conflict of altar against altar. The British Missionary Committee had both men and money, and proceeded to strengthen its forces in Upper Canada. Every year the number was increased, and in Kingston, Belleville, Peterboro, Toronto, Barrie, Hamilton, Brantford, London, Goderich, Guelph, and other places the societies were divided. Add to this the fact that in its struggle for religious equality and the just settlement of the Clergy Reserves question the Canada Conference must now reckon the British Committee and missionaries among its foes, and it will be seen that the Church was passing through the darkest period of its history.

At this juncture (1841) an important change took place in the civil affairs of the Canadas. The Home Government had determined on a legislative union of the two provinces, and in the new constitution the principle of responsible government was recognised. The Bill passed the Legislatures of the two provinces, was ratified by the Imperial Government, and went into operation on the 10th of February 1841. The Act provided for a Legislative Council of not less than twenty life members appointed by the Crown, and an Assembly of eighty-four members elected by the people, each province being equally represented. This was a great advance over former

conditions, for now responsibility was placed where it properly belonged, and the control of all the public revenues passed into the hands of the people's representatives.

But let changes in the political or ecclesiastical sphere be what they might, the storm-centre of Canadian politics was still the Clergy Reserves. It is true that behind this was the broader question of responsible government, but when that was conceded it only opened the way to deal effectively with the other question. For twenty years irresponsible government had been the bulwark of the Clergy Reserves monopoly and the State Church pretensions which it involved; and now that the bulwark was removed, it seemed reasonable to hope that the standing grievance would follow. But in this the friends of equal rights reckoned without their host. Monopolies die hard; and of all human passions, religious exclusiveness, backed by cupidity, is the least likely to surrender what it regards as vested rights without a determined struggle. Gladly would the politicians have seen this troublesome question banished to "the tomb of all the Capulets," or some other limbo from which it would never return; but nothing save a righteous settlement could drive it from the field. Like an unquiet ghost, it "would not down," and how to exorcise it was the perplexing question. For twenty years it had agitated the whole country, and was one of the main grievances that provoked the ill-advised rebellion of 1837. During the same period the Methodist Church had steadily and unitedly opposed the claims of the monopolists, and the history of the Clergy Reserves and the Methodist Church

touch each other at so many points that a knowledge of the one is necessary to a right understanding of the other. It may be serviceable, therefore, at this point, to recall briefly the chief features of the case.

In 1791, when the province of Quebec was divided into Upper and Lower Canada, one seventh of the public lands was set apart for the support of the Protestant clergy. Down till 1819 the lands so reserved were in the hands of the Government and managed by it alone, but for years they yielded scarcely enough to defray the expenses of management. In 1817 the Upper Canada House of Assembly objected to the provision as "beyond all precedent lavish," and complained that the Reserves were an obstacle to improvement and settlement. In 1819 the right of the Presbyterians (Kirk of Scotland) to share in the Reserves was first mooted, and one congregation petitioned the Government for an annual grant of £100 out of the Clergy Reserves. At this time the actual product was about £700 per annum. The matter was referred to Lord Bathurst, the Secretary for the Colonies, who stated that in the opinion of the law officers of the Crown the provisions of 1791 were not confined solely to the clergy of the Church of England, but might be extended also to the clergy of the Church of Scotland, but not to dissenting ministers. In 1819, on the application of Bishop Mountain of Quebec, the clergy in each province were incorporated for the purpose of managing the Reserves, the proceeds to be paid over to the Government. The following year the clergy of the Church of Scotland memorialised the King for a share in the Reserves. In 1823 the House of Assembly passed resolutions

affirming the right of the Church of Scotland to share in the Reserves, but the Legislative Council rejected the resolution by a vote of six to five.

In 1824 Archdeacon Strachan was deputed by the Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, and the Bishop of Quebec to go to England and get authority from the Colonial Secretary to sell portions of the Reserves. Meanwhile the Canada Company offered to purchase all the Crown and Clergy Reserve lands at a valuation. Some misunderstanding having arisen between Lord Bathurst, the archdeacon, and the Canada Company, Dr. Strachan went again to England in 1826, and was deputed by Lord Bathurst to arrange the differences with the commissioner of the company. The original plan was altered, and the lands were exchanged for one million acres in what was known as the Huron Tract. Out of the moneys received from the Canada Company the Home Government appropriated £700 a year to the clergy of the Kirk of Scotland and the same amount to the clergy of the Church of Rome. At a later date (1830) Presbyterian ministers of other bodies were put on the same footing as those belonging to the Kirk. In January 1826 the House of Assembly memorialised the King to distribute the proceeds of the Reserves for the benefit of all denominations, or else apply them to the purposes of education and the general improvement of the province. The reply was so unsatisfactory that in the following December the House of Assembly adopted a series of resolutions deprecating the appropriation of the Reserves to the clergy of the Church of England, to the exclusion of other denominations, and praying that the proceeds be

applied to the support of schools, a provincial academy, and aiding in the erecting of places of worship for all denominations. These resolutions passed almost unanimously, but the Bill founded upon them was negatived in the Legislative Council.

In 1827 a Bill was introduced into the British Parliament to provide for the sale of the Reserves as asked for by the Bishop of Quebec. In the debate which followed information was asked for concerning the state of the English and Scotch Churches in Upper Canada. Archdeacon Strachan undertook to furnish this information by means of his famous letter and chart, dated 16th May 1827. Objections being made to giving the clergy corporation power to sell, the Bill was withdrawn, and a new one introduced and passed confining the selling power to the Executive Government. In 1828 the House of Assembly memorialised the King to place the proceeds of the Reserves at the disposal of the House for the purposes of education and internal improvement. In 1829 two despatches on the Clergy Reserves question were sent to the Colonial Secretary by Sir John Colborne. An extract from one of these will be interesting as showing not only the attitude of the highest official in the province, but throwing light upon the influences that were at work to checkmate the Methodists in their stubborn resistance to a dominant State Church and the Clergy Reserves monopoly. In his despatch dated 11th April 1829 Sir John Colborne observed:

"If a more ardent zeal be not shown by the Established Church, and a very different kind of minister than that which is generally to be found in this province

sent out from England, it is obvious that the members of the Established Church will be inconsiderable, and that it will continue to lose ground. The Methodists, apparently, exceed the number of the Churches of England and Scotland. . . . If the Wesleyan Methodists in England could be prevailed on to supply this province with preachers, the Methodists of the country would become, as a political body, of less importance than they are at present."

In this same year (1829) the House of Assembly passed a Bill similar to that of 1828, and again in 1830, but both were rejected by the Legislative Council. In 1834 a Bill to revest the Clergy Reserves in the Crown was finally passed, but was rejected by the Legislative Council. In 1835 a Bill to sell the Reserves and apply the proceeds to educational purposes passed the Assembly by a vote of forty to four, but was rejected as usual by the Council. The latter body then proposed that both the Houses should request the Imperial Parliament to legislate on the subject. The Assembly peremptorily refused to concur, and remonstrated with the Council on its refusal to pass the measure or originate one of its own. In 1836 the Bill of the previous year was passed by a vote of thirty-five to five. The Legislative Council amended it so as to leave the matter with the British Parliament; but the amendment was negatived by the House by a vote of twenty-seven to one. This ended the matter for a time, and the rebellion of 1837–38 held the question in abeyance for several years.[1]

In 1836 Sir John Colborne was succeeded by Sir

[1] J. George Hodgins, LL.D., in Ryerson's *Story of My Life*, pp. 220–224.

Francis Bond Head as Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. A general election was pending, and the new Governor, with more adroitness than candour, made the issue turn on the question of loyalty to the Crown, and the real issues were kept out of sight. This so far turned the scale that the new Assembly had a majority of members whose views were in harmony with the dominant party in the Legislative Council. Advantage was taken of this circumstance to remove the Clergy Reserves question to the British Parliament, where sympathy with the Church of England could be relied upon to shape the legislation. At the third session of the Upper Canada Assembly in 1838 a Bill was introduced to "revest the Clergy Reserves in her Majesty." The moment the fact became known, the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, who was stationed at Kingston, wrote a letter to the *Guardian* in which he denounced the Bill in vigorous terms. "The measure itself," he said, "containing the provision it does, is a shameful deception upon the Canadian public — is a wanton betrayal of Canadian rights — is a disgraceful sacrifice of Canadian to selfish party interests — is a covert assassination of a vital principle of Canadian constitutional and free government — is a base political and religious fraud, which ought to excite the deep concern and rouse the indignation and vigorous exertion of every friend of justice and freedom and good government in the country."

In 1837 the Hon. William Morris, on behalf of the Church of Scotland, and the Hon. W. H. Draper, on behalf of the Church of England, were sent to England to interview the Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin, on the subject. In the same year Mr. Ryerson was requested

to draw up a paper setting forth the views of leading members of the Conference. The paper was signed by Rev. Messrs. Harvard, Evans, Jones, Wilkinson, Beatty, and Wright, and was published in the *Guardian* of 17th January 1838. When recalled to the editorship of the *Guardian* at the Conference of the same year, Mr. Ryerson published a series of powerful articles on "The Clergy Reserve Question, as a Matter of History, a Question of Law, and the Subject of Legislation," addressed to the Hon. W. H. Draper, Solicitor-General. He also prepared and circulated extensively a petition to the House of Assembly on the Clergy Reserves and kindred topics. A counter petition was issued by the Government party asking the Assembly to recognise the principle of an Established Church. In those days the *Guardian* did not merely speak on these absorbing public questions, it thundered, and when its "thunders uttered their voices" it was as a mighty trumpet peal, summoning the hosts of freedom to battle. The effect was tremendous. If former discussions provoked a storm this one raised a hurricane, and for months its fury beat upon the head of Egerton Ryerson. So intense was the feeling in the latter part of 1838 that the promoters of the Ryerson petition were threatened with personal violence and even with death.

In the face of widespread and determined opposition, and especially in the face of the declaration of the Colonial Secretary, the dominant party did not venture in 1839 to bring in a Bill to revest the Clergy Reserves in the Crown. In a despatch to Sir F. B. Head, Lord Glenelg had said, "Imperial Parliament legislation on

any subject of exclusively internal concern, in any British colony possessing a representative assembly, is, as a general rule, unconstitutional. It was a right of which the exercise is reserved for extreme cases, in which necessity at once creates and justifies the exception." To get around this decision, an entirely different Bill was prepared for each House. In the Assembly, after a very protracted debate, the Bill was carried and sent to the Legislative Council for concurrence. The Council struck out all after the word "whereas," and substituted its own Bill. This in turn was rejected by the Assembly and an entirely new Bill substituted, which concluded as follows: "The moneys to arise and to be procured and henceforth received for any sale or sales shall be paid into the hands of her Majesty's Receiver-General of this province, to be appropriated by the Provincial Legislature for religion and education." Now the Council had its opportunity. The last words of the clause were amended so as to read, "Imperial Parliament for religious purposes," and then by adroit manœuvring they succeeded in carrying the Bill through the Assembly, on the last night of the session, by a majority of one. The Home Government, however, disallowed the Bill on technical grounds.

In 1840 the Governor, Mr. Poulett Thompson, sent a message to the House outlining the provisions of a Bill which Solicitor-General Draper submitted with the Governor's sanction. It provided that the annual proceeds of the whole fund realised from the sale of the Clergy Reserves should be divided (one half to the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches, and the other half among other religious bodies desiring to share it) for the support of

religious instruction within the province. The Bill was fiercely assailed by Dr. Strachan, recently appointed Bishop of Toronto, but he thought the Church need be under no apprehension that the Bill would pass. "If any of her children inclined to despondency, let them turn their eyes to England, where we have protectors both numerous and powerful, watching the struggle, and holding out the hand of fellowship and assistance." Of course Mr. Ryerson (he was not yet "Doctor") took up the gage of battle, and pointed out that "the Provincial Legislatures have nothing to do, either directly or indirectly, with the Romish Church; but the same Legislature may repeal or modify the 31st Geo. III. cap. 31, as far as it respects the Church of England." The Bill passed the House of Assembly by a vote of 31 to 7, and the Legislative Council by 13 to 4, in spite of a most vigorous protest by the Bishop of Toronto. It was sent to England accompanied by a despatch from the Governor imploring the Home Government to sanction it. In the House of Lords the Bishop of Exeter moved that the question of the right of the clergy to reserve property in Canada should be referred to the twelve Judges of England; but their decision proved adverse to the claims of the monopolists. A conference was then had with Lord John Russell in order to set aside the Canadian Bill and introduce one into the Imperial Parliament which would accomplish what the Church of England was aiming at. Lord John Russell became a consenting party, and it was against this Bill that Messrs. W. and E. Ryerson (then in England) so strongly remonstrated on behalf of the Wesleyan Church in Canada, in an elaborate letter to Lord John Russell. The

measure was far more sweeping than anything proposed by the High Church party in Upper Canada, and was a most disheartening blow to the friends of equal rights for all under equal conditions. At the session of the Conference held in Toronto in 1841 the following resolutions concerning it were adopted:

"What are the sentiments of the Conference on the measure which had been adopted by the Imperial Parliament on the question of the Clergy Reserves in Upper Canada?

"1. That we feel deeply aggrieved that unmerited injustice has been done to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, as well as to several other legally recognised denominations of Christians in Upper Canada, by the unequal and unjust provisions of that Act, so different from every expression of opinion and feeling which has ever been made by the inhabitants of Upper Canada, so opposed to the recorded opinion of both branches of the Provincial Legislature, and the strong and reiterated opinion of his Excellency the Governor-General of Canada.

"2. That notwithstanding we feel ourselves, as a body, injured and aggrieved by the invidious and partial provisions of this Act, we recommend, in the present circumstances of the country, an abstinence from any re-agitation of the question. We submit to it as a law for conscience' sake, whilst our representatives properly remonstrated against it as a Bill."

It might be supposed that this vexed and vexing question was disposed of for all time, but, strange to say, it was reopened three years later by the very party in whose

interests the measure had been adopted. In 1843 the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General of Canada reported that having attentively examined the Act it was their opinion that the proper construction of the law threw upon the revenues of Canada the burden of making up any deficiency in the Clergy Reserve fund in paying the usual allowances to the ministers, and while that deficiency lasted the Imperial Treasury could not be called upon to make any payments to the two churches. This resulted in an agitation for "better terms." No relief was afforded, however, and the Act remained unrepealed until 1853. In that year an Act was passed which, after providing for a commutation of existing claims, devoted the balance of the Reserves fund to purposes of education. And thus at last that for which the Methodist Church had contended for more than thirty years was conceded, and the great controversy was ended.

Meanwhile, the controversy between the Canada Conference and the British Wesleyan Committee, and between the agents of the two bodies in Canada, continued, to the disadvantage of both and to the cause of God in general. The enemies of Methodism, who had been active in fomenting the misunderstanding, rejoiced, but every friend of true religion mourned. At one stage of the controversy Mr. Ryerson offered to refer the points in the dispute to an impartial tribunal for arbitration, but the offer was declined. It had been intimated more than once that he was the Jonah in the ship, and that if he were thrown overboard the storm would quickly subside; but the crew (the Canada Conference) showed no disposition to resort to so drastic a measure. In 1840 Mr. Ryerson

retired, finally and absolutely, from the editorship of the *Guardian*, and was succeeded by the Rev. Jonathan Scott, a brother who had taken no prominent part in any of the disputes. But in the *Guardian* or out of it, the former editor was still a force to be reckoned with, and was universally regarded as the champion of Conference rights. At the Conference of 1842 he sought to relieve the situation by resigning his seat in the Conference, and voluntarily relinquishing any participation in its legislative and executive councils; but the Conference utterly refused to entertain the proposal.

While this controversy was going on, the possibility of a reunion was privately discussed between leading men in both Conferences. In the autumn of 1843 the Rev. Joseph Stinson, then in England, wrote to Mr. Ryerson stating that there was a strong desire on the part of many influential ministers that the work in Canada might be consolidated. In December of the same year he wrote again in still stronger terms: "Let us still labour and pray for the great object of union. Every day, and every aspect which the Church and the world presents, deepens the conviction in my mind of its necessity, and I hope we shall live to see a united and prosperous Church in Canada, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail." When Mr. Ryerson visited England in 1844, after his appointment as chief Superintendent of Education, he wrote to the Rev. Joseph Stinson and the Rev. G. Marsden on the union question, and from both of them received encouraging and sympathetic replies. At the Canada Conference of 1845 a note was received from the sub-secretary of the British Conference, enclosing resolutions passed two years

before, appointing a committee to settle matters with the Canada Conference. The latter body appointed a similar committee, but, if one may judge from some of the correspondence of that period, with faint hopes of accomplishing anything. In fact nothing did result from the correspondence; but when Mr. Ryerson returned to Canada he wrote to the Rev. Peter Jones, who was then in England, requesting him, on behalf of the committee, to see the Rev. James Dixon, and urge him to come to Canada. Mr. Dixon was favourably impressed with the invitation, and wrote to Dr. Ryerson in March 1846 on the subject. There is one part of his letter which displays such far-seeing statesmanship that I reproduce an extract:

"The time must come when the North American provinces will be united, ecclesiastically, by having a General Conference of their own, in connexion with the Provincial or District Conferences, after the manner of the United States. Things must come to this at no remote period; and this being the case, it seems reasonable to consider such scheme in connexion with the measure now under review. . . . I am deeply convinced myself that the organisation of such a body as I refer to must, in the nature of things, develop the energies of Methodism in the provinces infinitely more vigorously than can be secured by the action of a distant Government."

There were not only "giants in the earth in those days," there were prophets also—men who could forecast the future—"men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." Nearly thirty years elapsed before what James Dixon foresaw came to pass, but events have justified the wisdom of his thought.

At the Kingston Conference of 1846 the division in Canadian Methodism was the subject of anxious and prayerful deliberation, and it was decided "to send a deputation from this Conference to the British Conference at its next annual session, with proposals to settle the differences between us on the plan of North American Conferences." In accordance with this resolution, the Rev. John Ryerson and Anson Green were chosen delegates, and in the address to the British Conference the scope of their mission and the spirit of those who sent them were indicated in the following words:

"The unhappy divisions which have for several years existed in this country between the two legitimate branches of the Wesleyan family have again engaged our Conference deliberations; and in reply to the resolution of your last Conference, we have determined to send a deputation to you, with a view to the termination of these unmethodistic and unchristian differences, and in the hope of consolidating Wesleyan Methodism in British North America in one great religious community. . . . We deeply regret the discussion of former differences between the two bodies which has arisen in this country during the last few months. Such discussions cannot be more strongly disapproved of by you than they are deprecated by us and our people generally. It is our earnest desire and determination to put an end to such unseemly and injurious discussions, and to cultivate a spirit of Christian forbearance and brotherly kindness."

When the delegation from Canada reached England they put themselves in communication with the authorities of the Conference, but at first their reception was any-

thing but encouraging. The Rev. John Ryerson, writing to his brother Egerton, declares, "The difficulties in the way of any proper adjustment of our differences seem to be almost insurmountable. . . . Our situation is anything but pleasant; it is even distressing and painful." The only alleviation was found in the cordial and affectionate attention of the Rev. Joseph Stinson and William Lord, both of whom had been in Canada and knew much about the circumstances and temper of the Canadian Conference. The reception of the Canadian delegates and address was now moved by Dr. Bunting and seconded by Dr. Alder, but the great influence of these men did not prevent a somewhat warm debate, in which some contended that the union had been only a source of trouble and injury to their work, and as it had been dissolved they had better keep aloof from all further intercourse with the Canada Conference. However, the resolution received warm support not only from the mover and seconder, but also from Drs. Beaumont and Dixon, and Messrs. Lord and Stinson, and was passed by a vast majority. But the troubles of the delegates were not yet over, and at the end of a week John Ryerson wrote to his brother, "Were I to follow the strong impulse of my mind, I should leave at once and return to America."

But, as so often happens, the darkest hour was just before the dawn. The whole matter was referred to a committee which met in London, and then light began to break. "There was," says the Rev. John Ryerson, in a letter under date of 16th September, "a most full, frank, and undisguised explanation of many missionary and domestic matters. . . . After this full unburdening of

ourselves, the one to the other, a totally different feeling seemed to come over Drs. Bunting, Alder, and the whole committee, which consisted of about thirty leading members of the British Conference. . . . More kindness, more nobleness of sentiments and feeling, I never witnessed than was manifested toward us after we had succeeded in removing suspicion and allaying fears." The basis of the new agreement cannot be better summarised than by an extract from the same letter from which I have just quoted:

"The plan of settlement to which I have agreed is a union with the British Conference on a basis similar to that by which the British and Irish Conferences are united. The British Conference appoints our President and the Superintendent of Missions, as in the former union; all of our missions become missions of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; our Missionary Society is auxiliary to their Society. The £700 grant to be placed under the Missionary Committee to be appropriated for missionary purposes in Canada. On the other hand, all the regular British missionary circuits in Canada are to be placed under the Canada Conference, the same as any other circuits; and there are to be no missionary districts, but the missionaries are to be members of the different districts in the bounds of which their missions are situated. The missionaries are to be stationed by our Stationing Committee the same as other ministers. The British Conference is to appropriate £600 sterling annually to our Contingent Fund, and the Missionary Committee is to place £400 at the disposal of our Conference for contingent purposes."

Dr. Alder was sent out as President of the Conference

of 1847, which assembled at Toronto on the 8th day of June, with the Rev. Matthew Richey, M.A., as co-delegate, and the Rev. Enoch Wood Superintendent of Missions. The new basis of union was discussed in all its bearings, and adopted by an almost unanimous vote. The breach was healed; the strife and discord of seven long years was ended, and Methodist unity was restored. Dr. Dixon's splendid vision of a wider federation was not realised; but that could afford to wait—the time was not ripe. But the union that had been accomplished had within it the promise and potency of greater things to come. With grateful hearts and tear-dimmed eyes the brethren "thanked God and took courage." Misunderstandings had been removed; estrangements were a thing of the past. And as the war-worn itinerants separated to return to their distant fields of toil, words written long afterwards, and referring to another union, would have aptly expressed the feelings of their hearts:

> Let us then, uniting, bury
> All our idle feuds in dust,
> And to future conflicts carry
> Mutual faith and common trust;
> Always he who most forgiveth
> To his brother is most just.[1]

Thank God that from the day on which that second union was consummated—a union founded on mutual confidence and esteem—Canadian Methodism entered upon a career of growth and development that has continued with unabated force to this day.

[1] W. H. Withrow, D.D.

VI

FOUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MISSIONS[1]

It is often said that the Church of Christ is essentially missionary. The saying is trite but true. The great purpose for which the Church is organised is to "preach the gospel to the whole creation," and its mission is fulfilled only in so far as this is done. But the saying, as commonly used, is the recognition of a principle rather than the statement of a fact. It is clearly perceived that the Church *ought* to be intensely missionary in its spirit and practice, and this view is often pressed as an argument to quicken flagging zeal, and to revive, if possible, the apostolic spirit in the Church of to-day. Compared with apostolic times, missionary zeal and enterprise is yet below high-water mark; but compared with the state of affairs one hundred years ago, it cannot be affirmed that the former times were better than these. Within the past century—indeed, within the last few decades—there has been a marked revival of the missionary spirit. The sleep of the Church has been broken. Her dormant energies have been aroused

[1] This section is in part a transcription of an article contributed to the *Centennial Volume of Canadian Methodism* in 1891, with such changes and additions as present conditions require.

and an aggressive policy initiated. Responsibility, even to the measure of a world-wide evangelism, is freely acknowledged, and the disposition to consecrate money and service on the altar of missionary sacrifice grows apace. All this gives token of a coming day when it may be affirmed without qualification that the Church—in fact as well as in profession—is essentially missionary.

It may be claimed, without boasting or exaggeration, that Methodism has not only contributed somewhat to the revival of the missionary spirit, but has been, under God, a chief factor in promoting it. The place of her nativity was hard by the missionary altar, and a spirit of intense evangelism gave the first impulse to her work. Born anew amid the fervours of a second Pentecost, her first preachers were men baptized with the tongues of flame, symbol of a comprehensive evangelism that found expression in the saying of her human leader, "I look upon all the world as my parish." In the spirit of that saying Methodism has lived and laboured, and after the lapse of more than a hundred and fifty years the primitive impulse is yet unspent. Wherever the banner of the cross is unfurled Methodist missionaries are found, and this is the battle-cry of the legions, "Christ for the world, and the world for Christ."

As we have already seen, the beginnings of Methodism in Canada reveal the same providential features that marked its rise in other lands. No elaborate plans were formulated in advance, no forecastings of human wisdom marked out the lines of development. But men who had felt the constraining power of the love of Christ, and to whom the injunction to disciple all nations came with the force of a personal mandate, went forth at the call of God,

exhorting men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel. Out of that flame of missionary zeal sprang the Methodist Church in Canada; and if the missionary cause is still dear to the hearts of her people, it is but the legitimate outcome of the circumstances in which she had her birth. Methodism is a missionary Church, or she is nothing. To lose her missionary spirit is to be recreant to the great purpose for which God raised her up. Nor can she give to missions a secondary place in her system of operations without being false to her traditions and to her heaven-appointed work.

While Methodism in Canada was, from the very first, missionary in spirit and aims, organised missionary effort did not begin till 1824. In that year a Conference Missionary Society was formed. It was a bold movement, such as could have been inaugurated only by heaven-inspired men. Upper Canada (at that time ecclesiastically distinct from Lower Canada) was just beginning to emerge from its wilderness condition. Settlements were few and, for the most part, wide asunder. Population was sparse and the people were poor. Moreover, Methodism had not yet emerged from the position of a despised sect, and prejudice was increased by the fact that it was under foreign jurisdiction. Such a combination of unfavourable circumstances might well have daunted ordinary men, and led to a postponement of any effort to organise for aggressive missionary work. But "there were giants in the earth in those days," whose faith and courage were equal to any emergency; men who could read history in the germ and forecast results when "the wilderness and the solitary place" should become "glad," and "the desert"

should "rejoice and blossom as the rose." As yet it was early spring-time and sowing had just begun; but from freshly opened furrows and newly scattered seed those men were able to foretell both the kind and the measure of the harvest when falling showers and shining suns should ripen and mature the grain. In that faith they planned and laboured. They did not despise the day of small things, but with faith in the "incorruptible seed," they planted and watered, leaving it to God to give the increase. In this, as in other cases, wisdom was justified of her children. When the Missionary Society was organised in 1824, two or three men were trying to reach some of the scattered bands of Indians; the income of the society the first year was only about $144, and the whole field of operation was a small section of Upper Canada. To-day the missionary force at home and abroad is a little army of over one thousand persons (including the wives of missionaries); the income exceeds $300,000, while the field covers half a continent and extends far into "the regions beyond."

The development of the missionary idea in the Methodist Church in Canada has been influenced by epochs in her history, marking changes in her ecclesiastical polity. In 1828 the Canadian societies were severed from the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, and formed into an independent branch of Methodism, with its own Conference and government. In 1833 a union was formed with the British Wesleyan Conference, whereby the field of operation was extended. In 1840 that union was dissolved, and for seven years the two societies waged a rival warfare, which was by no means favourable to the growth of a true missionary spirit. In

1847 the breach was healed, and from that time onward the missionary work of the Church steadily developed, embracing the Wesleyan Indian missions in the far north, and extending the work in all directions throughout Upper and Lower Canada.

The year 1873 marks a distinct epoch in the history of missions in connexion with Canadian Methodism. In that year the bold step, as some considered it, was taken of founding a distinctively foreign mission, and many indications pointed to Japan as a promising field. The wisdom of the step was doubted by some who thought the home work was sufficiently extensive to absorb the energies and liberality of the entire Church. Viewed from the standpoint of mere human prudence, the objectors were right. The home missionaries were struggling along on very inadequate stipends; many Indian bands were still unreached; the calls from new settlements were loud and frequent, and the vast French population of the province of Quebec was scarcely touched by Methodistic agencies. It is not to be wondered at that, under such circumstances, some were inclined to say, "We have here only five barley loaves and two small fishes, and what are these among so many?"[1] But there were others who remembered the lesson of the "twelve baskets of fragments" taken up after five thousand men, besides women and children, had been fed. Conspicuous among these were the late Dr. Punshon, and the late Senator Macdonald, at that time lay treasurer of the society; and these said to the doubting ones in effect, "Let us have faith in God; let us bring our little at Christ's command, and His blessing will cause our little

[1] The income of the society at this time was only $108,369.

to multiply until there will be enough to feed the hungry multitude, and the Church shall be recompensed far beyond the measure of what it gives away." Thus in prayer and faith the forward movement was inaugurated, and a mission planted in Japan which, from the very beginning, has shared largely in blessings from on high. Nor did the home missions suffer because of this new departure, for the missionary spirit thus revived in the Church was followed by a corresponding liberality, and the increased contributions more than sufficed to meet the increased expenditure.

The next development affecting the polity and work of the Church occurred in the following year, 1874, when the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Methodist New Connexion Church, and the Wesleyan Church of Eastern British America united in one body under the name of the Methodist Church in Canada. This union extended the home missions of the Church by consolidating the forces east and west, thus covering the whole extent of the Canadian Dominion, and embracing, in addition, Newfoundland and the Bermudas. This arrangement involved the peaceful separation of the three churches named from the jurisdiction of the parent bodies in England, and the relinquishment, after a few years, of certain missionary subsidies which two of them had been receiving from the parent treasuries. The loss of these subsidies, and the increased expenditure in consequence of unavoidable readjustments of the work, caused temporary embarrassment, and the accumulation of a somewhat serious debt; but an appeal to the Church met with so liberal a response that the debt was extinguished without reducing the

regular income, and the work went on as before. It was felt, however, that, for a time at least, the duty of the Church would lie in the direction of consolidation rather than expansion; and hence for several years no new movement was made beyond the prudent enlargement of fields already occupied.

The missionary spirit, which for years had been growing in the Methodist Church, found a new outlet in 1880 in the organisation of the Women's Missionary Society. In June of that year a number of ladies met in the parlours of the Centenary Church in the city of Hamilton, on the invitation of the General Missionary Secretary, when the project of a Women's Missionary Society was carefully considered, and the conclusion reached to organise forthwith. That afternoon meeting marks the beginning of what has become one of the most potent forces in connexion with the mission work of the Methodist Church. Nor can a thoughtful observer fail to see how divine Providence controlled the time as well as the circumstances. The union movement which culminated in 1883 was just beginning to be discussed. Four distinct churches were looking forward to union as at least a possibility; but whether it would be possible so to amalgamate their varied interests as to make of the four one new Church, was a problem that remained to be solved. In the accomplishment of this difficult task the mission work of the Church was a prime factor, for it served by its magnitude and importance to turn the attention of ministers and people from old differences, and even antagonisms, and to fix it upon a common object. What the work of the General Missionary Society did for one

part of the Church, the Women's movement did for another. Just at the right moment Providence gave the signal, and the godly and devoted women of Methodism in all the uniting churches joined hands in an earnest effort to carry the gospel to the women and children of heathendom, and in that effort they mightily aided to consolidate the work at home. A constitution for the society was not adopted till 1881, but since then the income has steadily risen from $2,916 in 1881–82 to $49,776 in 1901–2. At the present time the society has under its control "eight boarding schools or homes, besides a share in two institutes, eight day schools, two night and two industrial schools, four kindergartens, three orphanages, one hospital and dispensary, fifteen Bible-women, seven nurses, making forty-five missionaries. . . . Property is now owned by the society to the value of $56,383."[1]

Another movement, destined to exert a far-reaching influence on Methodist missionary enterprise, had its beginning in 1896. Some years before this the Christian Endeavour movement swept over the churches of the United States and Canada, and tens of thousands—yea, hundreds of thousands—of young people were enrolled in the organisation. It was to be non-denominational, or rather inter-denominational, in its character, and it sought to unite the young people of all denominations for Christian work. The aim was good, the intentions were of the best, and the results in many directions have been helpful; but in the phenomenally rapid growth of the society the problem of utilising the newly developed force so as to

[1] *Report* for 1901–2.

prevent it from evaporating in mere convention talk that meant nothing, had to be faced. As an organisation the society had nothing before it sufficiently definite and comprehensive to give scope for its energies, and the leaders advised, among other things, that the members co-operate with the boards of their respective denominations in missionary work. How far this may have answered in other churches I am not prepared to say, as the facts are not in my possession; but in the Methodist Church it did not answer at all. Whatever be the cause, young people's societies in the Methodist Church, organised on the Christian Endeavour plan, have very rarely manifested any interest in Methodist missions, and their contributions, for the most part, have either gone to other denominations or to independent missionary organisations.

In 1890, following the example of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, provision was made to organise the young people of the Methodist Church in Canada in a society to be called the Epworth League. The object defined in the society's constitution, as enlarged in 1894, is "to unite" the "young people in Christian fellowship and service; increase their spirituality by edification in Scripture truth and by prayer; instruct them in Methodist doctrine and church history; enlist their co-operation in missionary activities through existing denominational organisations, and stimulate and interest them in the formation and development of leagues." The growth of the Epworth League, like that of the Christian Endeavour Society, was phenomenally rapid, although in a great many congregations the ground was preoccupied by a Young People's Society on the Christian Endeavour plan.

But when a few years had passed some began to inquire, "Well, what next? We are well organised, but what is to be the outcome of it all? We have our meetings for prayer and testimony and Scripture study, and these are good and profitable; but what shall the young people *do*? Where is there a safe outlet for the zeal that has been awakened? Is there not a danger that the organisation will degenerate into a mere social club, with an occasional literary entertainment as the sum of its endeavours? True, we have a missionary department; but the young people know next to nothing about the mission work of our own Church, and there is a tendency to divert their missionary givings into some other channel than our own."

It was just at this juncture that some of the young men in the Methodist colleges — probationers for the ministry, medical students, and others—felt the claims of the missionary enterprise resting with unusual weight upon their hearts. They knew how the Board of Missions was hampered in its operations by an insufficient income; they were convinced that important sources of revenue were as yet almost untouched; and it occurred to them that the Epworth Leagues would supply an agency ready made, through which an educational campaign might be conducted that would turn the interest and sympathies of the young people into line with the general missionary policy of the Church. As loyal sons of Methodism, these young men first put themselves into communication with the Board of Missions, soliciting permission, with the consent of the Annual Conference authorities, to visit the various Epworth Leagues with the view of organising them on missionary lines. The desired permission was given, and in the autumn

of 1896 a number of students inaugurated the "Students' Campaign for Missions." In the course of a single year good results were so apparent that the board was encouraged to proceed. The young men readily responded to the appeal, and on district after district, in all the Conferences, the leagues fell into line. The organisation is now known as the "Young People's Forward Movement for Missions," and has assumed such proportions that the General Conference of 1902 authorised the Board of Missions to appoint a secretary to give undivided attention to this department. The young people have adopted the principle of systematic giving—two cents per week or upwards—for missions and the income from this source has now reached about $25,000 per annum, with a prospect of steady increase for many years to come. The leagues on various districts are contributing, with the consent of the board, for the support of particular missionaries; and at the present time forty missionaries in the French, Indian, and foreign work are supported, in whole or in part, from this source. On many districts summer or winter schools are held "for the study of the Bible and missions," and missionary literature is extensively circulated. As educating agencies both the Women's Missionary Society and the Young People's Forward Movement for Missions have rendered valuable service.

As at present organised, the mission work of the Methodist Church embraces a number of distinct departments. All are under the supervision of one board and are supported by one fund. Each department, in view of its importance, claims separate mention.

1. The domestic or home work includes all the missions

to English-speaking people throughout the Dominion and in Newfoundland and the Bermudas. From the very first inception of missionary operations the duty of carrying the gospel and its ordinances to the new settlers in every part of the country has been fully recognised and faithfully performed. This was the work to which the Church set herself before the beginning of the last century, at a time when missions, in the more extended sense, had not been thought of. At that period the population was sparse, as in some parts of the country it still is. Of home comforts there were little, and of wealth there was none; but the tireless itinerant, unmoved by any thought of gain or temporal reward, traversed the wilderness of Upper Canada and the maritime provinces, often guided only by a "blaze" on the trees or the sound of a solitary woodman's axe; sometimes compelled to sleep on the bare ground in the forest, where fitful dreams were broken by the fierce cry of the catamount or the long-drawn howl of the wolf. But in rough log schoolhouses, in the cabins of frontier settlers, or beneath shady trees on an improvised camp-ground they proclaimed the message of reconciling mercy, bringing peace and hope to troubled hearts. No wonder that their message was listened to with eagerness, and often embraced with rapture. Many of the settlers had enjoyed, in early years, religious privileges in lands far away, and these welcomed again the glad sound when heard in their new homes; while others, who under more favourable circumstances had turned a deaf ear to the gospel message, were touched with unwonted tenderness as they listened to the fervid appeals of an itinerant preacher amid the forest solitudes. Thus by night and day was the seed scattered

which since has ripened into a golden harvest. And if a time shall ever come when a truthful history of the English-speaking provinces of the Canadian Dominion shall be written, the historian, as he analyses the various forces that have helped to make the inhabitants of these provinces the most intelligent, moral, prosperous, and contented people beneath the sun, will give foremost place to the work of the saddle-bag itinerants who traversed the country when it was a wilderness, educating the people in that reverence for the word and worship of God which is alike the foundation of a pure morality and the safeguard of human freedom.

While steady enlargement had characterised the growth of home missionary enterprise, it was not till 1858 that the society in Upper Canada inaugurated a forward movement that reached out to "the regions beyond." For some time the thought of connexional leaders had been exercised respecting the spiritual needs of the scattered dwellers in British Columbia, at that time a region better known to intelligent Englishmen than to the inhabitants of Upper Canada. In fact, to the latter it was almost a *terra incognita*; for between them and it lay the breadth of more than half a continent, unspanned by railway, telegraph, or travelled highway, its streams unbridged, its prairies and mountains unexplored, its solitudes untenanted save by vast herds of buffalo on the plains and bands of nomadic Indians or solitary hunters and trappers. A voyage to England was a much less arduous undertaking than to journey to the distant Pacific colony. In the fifties, and for more than a generation later, the route was *vid* New York and the isthmus of Panama, involving a journey of more than six

thousand miles. In the days of the Cariboo gold excitement there were some adventurous spirits who essayed the overland journey, and I have repeatedly seen and conversed with one who, starting from near Toronto, made the whole journey on foot, finding his way as best he might from post to post of the Hudson's Bay Company, often hundreds of miles apart; subsisting on what food he could carry and on what his gun supplied; sleeping where night overtook him; wandering amid mountain fastnesses, repeatedly on the verge of starvation; fording unbridged and dangerous streams, but finding his way at last in safety to the shores of the Gulf of Georgia. Some who tried the same route were not so fortunate. Unable to sustain the rigours and hardships of the journey, they fell on the way, leaving their bones to bleach in a desolate mountain canyon or beneath the waters of a mountain torrent which they tried in vain to cross.

In April of 1858 the Rev. Dr. Wood, General Superintendent of Missions, addressed a letter to the General Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London respecting the establishment of additional missions westward toward the Rocky Mountains. Later in the same year the spiritual needs of British Columbia were brought before the General Secretaries, but without making any formal application for aid. Promptly and generously the British Committee took the initiative, and a grant of £500 sterling was sent for the immediate opening of a mission in British Columbia. As soon as it became known that this distant field was to be occupied, more than a dozen ministers, among whom were several chairmen of districts, volunteered their services, and after much solicitude and

prayer the Rev. Ephraim Evans, D.D., Edward White, Ebenezer Robson, and Arthur Browning were selected. Of the four beloved brethren the first two have long since passed to their reward; but Edward White lives again in the person of his son James, who is now Superintendent of Missions in British Columbia. Ebenezer Robson—now Dr. Robson—still survives, hale and vigorous. Arthur Browning is in quiet retirement near Toronto, but delights in revival work when the way opens, and preaches with much of his old-time fire. In British Columbia, owing to the sparseness of the population and other circumstances, the growth of the Church was slow; but growing out of the seed planted by the pioneers of more than forty years ago, and their successors, there is now a Conference of 80 ministers and probationers, 7 districts, 77 circuits and stations, 6,116 members, and 7,088 scholars in the Sunday schools. These statistics include missions to the Indians, Japanese, and Chinese; but the story of that work will be referred to in another connexion.

In 1868 another forward movement took place when the Board of Missions resolved to open work at Fort Garry, in what had been known till then as the Hudson's Bay Territory. Of this enormous region the outside world had only the vaguest notion. Men spoke of it as the Great Lone Land, and pictured it as a sterile, inhospitable region which even on its southern boundary was scarcely touched by the advancing frontiers of civilisation, while northward its gusty leagues of prairie, swamp and arctic forest stretched into the darkness and rigour of the Polar night. But the federation of the British American Colonies in 1867, when provision was made for the incorporation of

the Hudson's Bay Territory in the Dominion, had turned attention toward the hitherto unknown region, and emigrants from the older provinces began to set their faces toward the West. It was felt that something should be done to meet the spiritual needs of these new settlers, and the Board of Missions took action accordingly. Much would depend upon the selection made for this important mission, and the thoughts of many turned toward the Rev. George Young, D.D., an able and trusted minister, who had served in succession some of the most important circuits in the Connexion, and was at this time Chairman of the Toronto district and Superintendent of the Toronto West circuit, which included the largest church and congregation with one exception in Canadian Methodism. To sever the endearing associations of years, relinquish the conveniences and privileges of city life, and return in his forty-eighth year to the arduous toil and meagre pay of a pioneer missionary, was no small sacrifice; but it was cheerfully made, and in company with the Rev. Egerton R. Young and the Rev. Peter Campbell, who were sent to reinforce the Indian work, Dr. Young set out for his distant field. The party were able to proceed by rail and steamer as far as St. Paul, in the State of Minnesota, from which point a further journey of between six and seven hundred miles had to be made by horses and waggons over prairie trails before reaching Fort Garry. As the party proceeded northward they passed at intervals the blackened ruins of deserted homesteads, sad mementoes of a terrible massacre by the Sioux Indians that had occurred a year or two before. Then for a week together no sign of human habitation appeared; but at length, after a toilsome

journey of over a month from St. Paul, the party reached Fort Garry on the Red River of the North.

The little village beginning to spring up in the vicinity of the fort had been named Winnipeg, but in 1868 it was a sorry affair. "A mass of soft, black, slippery and sticky Red River mud," says Dr. Young, "was everywhere spread out before us. Streets with neither sidewalks nor crossings, with now and then a good-sized pit for the traveller to avoid or flounder through as best he could; a few small stores with poor goods and high prices; one little tavern where 'Dutch George' was 'monarch of all he surveyed'; a few passable dwellings, with no rooms to let nor space for boarders; neither church nor school in sight or in prospect; population about one hundred, instead of one thousand as we expected—such was Winnipeg on 4th July 1868." But these were not the only discouragements. A plague of locusts was in the land, and fields that a little while before bore promise of a bountiful harvest were now bare as if swept by a devouring fire. Flour was selling, even at that time, at from twenty-five to thirty shillings sterling per hundred pounds, and oats at eight shillings a bushel. Besides this, the buffalo hunters had met with very poor success, and there was the prospect of a positive famine.

Having secured, with very great difficulty, a place in which to live, and in which to conduct religious services, Dr. Young set himself to the laborious but very necessary task of laying foundations. Even at that early period he foresaw something of the possibilities of the future. "I am not a prophet," he wrote to the Mission Rooms in December 1868, "but I will predict for this mission,

whose foundations I am now trying to lay, a glorious future." How abundantly the prediction has been verified is well known to all who have visited the beautiful city of Winnipeg in recent years. In the true spirit of a Methodist itinerant Dr. Young extended his labours to the west beyond Portage la Prairie, a distance of seventy-five or eighty miles, and down Red River to lower Fort Garry, about twenty miles or more, visiting the scattered settlers on the way, conversing on matters pertaining to personal religion, reading from the Scriptures when opportunity offered, and praying with those who were willing he should do so. Keeping steadily in mind the establishment of a permanent circuit, Dr. Young was diligent in securing permission to preach regularly in private houses, the only places available at the time, as there were no public buildings as yet in the settlements. As a rule the desired permission was cheerfully given, and in many of those neighbourhoods there are to-day commodious churches, good congregations, and flourishing societies.

The ordinary difficulties incident to the founding of a mission in a new country, where everything has to be created from the beginning, are serious enough; but in Manitoba these were greatly augmented during the troublous times of 1869–70 by the revolt of the French half-breeds under Louis Riel. This bold, able, but thoroughly selfish and unscrupulous man had succeeded in ingratiating himself with his compatriots and co-religionists, and by impassioned appeals aroused their fears in regard to what he affirmed would take place when government from Ottawa would once be established. The French half-breeds were not only extremely ignorant (few of them

could either read or write), but they possessed in a large degree the excitable Gallic temperament, combined with the fighting instincts of their Indian ancestry, the very kind of people who could easily be roused to desperate undertakings by any unscrupulous demagogue who possessed —as Riel undoubtedly did—the gift of popular oratory. When once their prejudices were excited and their religious fanaticism aroused, such a man could lead them whithersoever he would. It is significant that, as the agitation went on, Riel was in the habit of delivering his inflammable harangues at the church doors on Sundays after the celebration of Mass. It is not too much to say that at any time a word from the Roman Catholic hierarchy could have stopped the whole agitation. But that word was never uttered, and by ominous silence the revolt was tacitly if not openly encouraged.[1]

The Government of the province or territory of Assiniboia, of which the Red River settlements were at this time a part, consisted of an elective Council, presided over by Governor M'Tavish of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company, and this was recognised by both the Imperial and Canadian Governments. In due time this was to be superseded by a Government fashioned after those of the other provinces of the Dominion. During this interval Riel and his fellow-conspirators were busy circulating alarming rumours among the people. For some time the signs of discontent were small, and little heed was paid to them. In this, as in many another case, "the beginning

[1] It is but just to say that during this period the Roman Catholic Archbishop, Monsignor Taché, was absent in Rome. It is the belief of Dr. Young and others that had he been in his diocese the designs of Riel would have been checked.

of strife" was "as when one letteth out water," and when the flood came it could not be stayed. Soon the agitation took the form of drilled and officered military companies, consisting exclusively of Riel's co-religionists and almost exclusively of French half-breeds. When word came that the newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor, the Hon. Wm. M'Dougall, and a party of officials were *en route* for Fort Garry by way of Pembina, a detachment of armed men took possession of the highway at a point where the Governor's party must necessarily pass, and erected a huge cross and a barricade to stop all travellers. In some cases trains of freighting carts were allowed to pass, while others were stopped and their contents confiscated. This occurred on the 21st of October 1869. On the 25th the Council of Assiniboia met and urged the leaders of the insurrection to cease their opposition, but without effect. A document was sent to Lieutenant-Governor M'Dougall at Pembina, forbidding him to enter the country. He did enter, however; but soon after was met by an armed force, under command of one Lepine, and threatened with dire consequences if he and his party did not leave by nine o'clock the next morning. Being entirely defenceless, Mr. M'Dougall retraced his steps across the boundary to await further instructions from Ottawa.

On 3rd November 1869 Riel, with a hundred and twenty-five armed followers, marched through the gates of Fort Garry and took possession of the fort with its immense stores. This gave the command of thirteen six-pounders and four hundred Enfield rifles, with abundance of ammunition and food supplies, and here for ten long months the petty tyrant lived in luxury and lorded it over

the surrounding country. A month after the capture of Fort Garry, Lieutenant-Governor M'Dougall (who still remained at Pembina), having been assured that the transfer of the territories would take place on 1st December, issued on that day a Queen's Proclamation, and also commissioned Colonel Dennis as his Lieutenant and Conservator of the Peace for the North-West Territories, with authority to appoint officers and organise and equip companies of loyalists for service in suppressing the rebellion. In a short time four hundred men were enrolled, but finding no sufficient supply of munitions of war, and no competent leadership, they fell away, until only about fifty were left to guard the lower fort, while fifty more, poorly equipped and officered, were sent to guard some government stores in Dr. Schultz's buildings in Winnipeg. As these buildings were within range of the guns of Fort Garry, and could be easily surrounded and cut off from supplies of wood and water, the impossibility of holding the position became at once apparent. Preparations were made by Riel for an assault on the buildings, and this induced Dr. Young (whose son was among the volunteers) to interview the self-styled "President" to try to dissuade him from an act that would result in much bloodshed and misery, but was insulted and brow-beaten in true half-breed style. On nearing the building, however, Dr. Young succeeded in getting his son away. He then pleaded for others of the volunteers, whose families needed their help, that they also be allowed to depart, but was indignantly dismissed. At this juncture a merchant of the town approached Riel to negotiate for a surrender on terms that might be agreed upon. After some delay these

were made known and assented to, and were to the effect that the surrendering party should "leave guns, ammunition, etc., in the buildings, and be marched to the fort, and then allowed to go where they pleased." Some doubted the sincerity of the promise, but the merchant—Mr. Bannatyne—assured them the agreement would be faithfully kept, and he would personally guarantee all private property; and on this assurance the surrender was made. Then followed an act of treachery which, apart from his other crimes, should suffice to hand down the name of Louis Riel to deserved infamy. About fifty disarmed loyalists, with three ladies (Mrs. Dr. Schultz, Mrs. Dr. O'Donnell, and Mrs. Mair, who accompanied their husbands), were surrounded by Riel's guards, marched to the fort, the gates of which closed upon them as soon as they entered, and they were prisoners without hope of escape, at the mercy of a man who was alike without honour and without humanity.

The indignities, privations, and sufferings endured by these betrayed people almost surpass belief. They were first located in the upper flat of a two-storey building, containing five or six small rooms opening into a central corridor. The latter was used as "guardroom," while the small rooms, without stoves, beds, or chairs, were packed with prisoners, so crowded that, to prevent suffocation, a pane of glass in each window had to be broken, and through these openings the biting frosts and piercing winds of a Manitoba winter had free entrance. The food supplied was the poorest quality of pemmican and tea; and when a number of kind-hearted women in the town prepared and sent baskets of bread, biscuits, cooked potatoes,

etc., these luxuries (for such they were under the circumstances) were often snatched and appropriated by the rapacious guards. But why go into such harrowing details? I speak of these things merely to show how Methodism, through its representatives, faithfully did its duty, as often before, in a crisis of the country's history, and vindicated its true character as "the friend of all—the enemy of none."

On the morning following the surrender Dr. Young went to Riel and solicited permission to hold service with the prisoners on the Lord's day; but the request met with this curt response: "No, you cannot meet them all together, nor speak to them; but you may go and pray with them only, for they much need to be prayed for." The faithful minister availed himself of the grudging permission, and thenceforward, twice during the week and once on Sabbath morning, held brief service in the different rooms. But this was always in the presence of an armed guard. And even when visiting the invalid wife of one of the prisoners in her own home, a rough fellow invariably entered the room at the same time, and seating himself on the side of the sufferer's bed, remained there while the minister prayed. And yet who can tell when and where and how a good seed may fall? Years afterward a surveyor from a remote settlement met Dr. Young and, in the course of conversation, said to him, "I feel that you should know a fact that came to my knowledge not long ago. The half-breed who used to stand guard over you during your services in the prisons in 1869 and 1870, and who recently died, when urged in his last illness to have the priest brought, said to his friends, 'If you can

bring Mr. Young, I should like him to come and pray for me as I used to hear him pray with the prisoners in Fort Garry.'"

About the middle of February another movement for the release of the prisoners took place. A number of loyalists from Portage la Prairie, and other places west, proceeded to Kildonan, east of Winnipeg, where they were joined by others, and from there sent a demand to Riel to release the prisoners. This was followed by an interchange of further messages, which resulted in an agreement that the prisoners would be discharged, while the relieving force would disband and return to their homes. At Riel's request they agreed to diverge from the regular trail so as not to pass near the fort; but while struggling through deep snowdrifts on the untracked prairie they were suddenly surrounded by an armed force from the fort, and informed that Riel desired them to call and see him before they returned home. Though feeling tolerably certain that they were betrayed, resistance was useless. As soon as they entered the fort the gates were closed as before, and they were declared prisoners and thrust into the very same rooms from which their friends had been released only a day or two before. A reign of tyranny and cruelty far worse than the past now seemed to be established, and no one could foresee whence deliverance would come. Some of the prisoners were known as leaders, and were regarded by Riel with especial enmity. Among these were Major Boulton, who had commanded the relieving party, Scott, Powers, M'Leod, and Parker. No sooner were the prisoners secured in the fort than a "council of war" was called, when it was decided that Boulton was guilty of

"treason," and Riel sentenced him to be shot at noon the next day. Through the earnest intercessions of Archdeacon M'Leod and Commissioner Smith (now Lord Strathcona) the execution was postponed, but only on the promise that they would proceed that very night to the lower settlement and persuade the people to elect representatives to an "Assembly" that Riel desired to see established. The efforts of the archdeacon and the commissioner were successful, and Major Boulton was spared.

It would be pleasant to relate that this was the end of Riel's barbarity, but worse was yet to come. A loyal young Irishman, Thomas Scott by name, had been treacherously arrested at the time of the attack on Dr. Schultz's building, but with some others he effected his escape on the 9th of December 1869. He subsequently volunteered with Major Boulton's company, and was a second time taken prisoner. For reasons never clearly understood, Riel cherished—or seemed to cherish—feelings of intense enmity to Scott; or possibly it may have been that the murderous instincts of his Indian nature had been aroused, and could be satisfied only with cruelty and bloodshed. Be that as it may, Scott's death was decreed. At his trial by the so-called "council of war" Riel was prosecutor, witness, and judge, and when Scott pleaded that he did not know of what crime he was accused, as he did not understand the language used, he was told that he was "a very bad man and must die." Returning from an appointment in the country, Dr. Young received a message from the fort that Scott was to be shot at noon on the morrow, and desired to see him. Fearing the worst,

everything possible was done to administer spiritual consolation to the doomed man. Dr. Young also sought an interview with Riel, and interceded with all the earnestness and pathos he could command on behalf of the prisoner, and was faithfully seconded by Commissioner Smith; but all to no avail. On the morrow Scott was led out to die. To the last Dr. Young continued to plead, but with no effect. A few moments later poor Thomas Scott fell, pierced by rebel bullets, and his heart's blood crimsoned the snow where he knelt. While his body lay quivering in death a half-drunken guard approached and fired a revolver at the victim's head. A fouler murder was never committed, and covers the name of Riel and of his Lieutenant O'Donohue with endless infamy.

It is not necessary to follow further the course of public events—the arrival of the expedition under Colonel Wolseley, the precipitate flight of the rebels, and the collapse of the bubble confederacy. What has been written has simply been to show in what troublous times the foundations of Methodist missions in the North-West were laid, and how much the courage and fidelity of the Rev. Dr. Young had to do with the hold which the work subsequently gained upon the people. With the subjugation of the incipient rebellion the dark days passed away. Lawful authority was soon established; the machinery of government and the law courts was set in motion, and business, freed from the dangers of revolt, began to prosper and extend. Additional missionaries were sent out to assist Dr. Young, and the work took definite shape. In 1872 a cheering impulse was given by the visit of a deputation from the Board of Missions,

consisting of the Rev. Dr. Punshon, President of Conference, Rev. Dr. Wood, Superintendent of Missions, and John Macdonald, Esq., Lay Treasurer of the Society. The missionaries had been summoned six months in advance, and arrived from far-distant Indian fields in time for the first Missionary Conference ever held in the North-West. The days spent in consultation, fellowship, and prayer were times of refreshing to the isolated and sometimes discouraged labourers, and they returned to their fields of toil with renewed courage and zeal. As the population increased, additional missionaries were sent, though for a length of time progress in both respects was comparatively slow. But in the later eighties, when the Canadian Pacific Railway spanned the continent and millions of fertile acres were thrown open for settlement, the whole situation was changed, and development in all directions became phenomenally rapid. Instead of the little handful of missionaries, most of them from Indian stations, that greeted the deputation in Winnipeg in 1872, there is now a Conference covering a territory fifteen hundred miles in length by from one hundred to three hundred miles in width, with two hundred and fifty ministers and probationers, and over twenty-two thousand members; and by far the greater part of this growth dates within the past fifteen years. Every year the momentum is increasing, and from the older provinces of the Dominion, from the United States, and from lands across the sea, population is rushing in at a rate that is simply bewildering. It is not too much to say that the home mission problem is to-day the all-absorbing topic in the Councils of Canadian Methodism, and the conviction

grows that nothing less than Pauline faith and consecration can meet the responsibilities of the hour.

2. Those who are familiar with the story of Canadian Methodism know how strongly the evangelization of the Indian tribes has appealed to the sympathies and zeal of the Church. At an early period attention was turned to the needs of these neglected and degraded people, and some of the noblest workers the Methodist Church ever produced cheerfully gave many of their best days to the Christlike task of seeking these lost sheep in the wilderness. The names of Egerton Ryerson, William Case, Peter Jones, the M'Dougalls (father and son), James Evans, Henry Steinhauer, Thomas Crosby, and many more, will ever be associated, in grateful remembrance, with the work of Indian evangelization. At the close of the revolutionary war there was a large emigration of Indians of the Six Nations from the Mohawk valley to the banks of the Grand River in Upper Canada, where a tract of land, sixty miles from north to south and twelve miles from east to west, was set apart by the British Government for their use. Within this tract, beginning at the river's mouth, were located the Cayugas, Delawares, Senecas, Tuscaroras, Onondagas, and Mohawks. These Indians, under a celebrated chief named Tyendenaga, commonly known among the whites as Captain Joseph Brant (after whom the city of Brantford is named), rendered substantial aid to the British forces in the revolutionary war, and it was as a reward for services, and to compensate for losses sustained, that the reservation was set aside. They numbered about two thousand and were all pagans except the Mohawks, who were nominally adherents of the

Church of England, but bore the reputation of being rather worse in their morals than the pagan tribes. An Anglo-Saxon may be moral after a fashion without religion; but not so an Indian, especially if he has come into contact with white civilisation. He must be converted through and through if he is to make any headway against temptation.

In 1823 Alvin Torry was appointed by the Methodist bishop to the Grand River Mission. His commission was to the white settlers on his extensive field, but his route led him through parts of the reservation, and his heart was stirred by the spiritual destitution of the Indians. He held services at intervals among the Delawares, with encouraging results. He also preached to the Tuscaroras and Mohawks, who seemed pleased with his visits. But even before the advent of the missionary a little had been done. A pious shoemaker named Edmund Stoney, a Methodist local preacher, held prayer-meetings in the house of Chief Thomas Davis, who was in the habit of reading portions of the Scriptures to his neighbours and the Church prayers in the Mohawk tongue. Stoney also preached occasionally, and a few Indians were awakened. The second labourer was Seth Crawford, a pious young man from the eastern States. When converted, a conviction took hold upon him that he ought to devote his life to the evangelizing of the Indians. Unexpected providences led him to the Mohawks on the Grand River. He told them he came to learn their language and teach their children, and they consented that he might live with them and fare as they did. It was after his coming that the first awakening occurred. A marked event

about this time was the conversion of Peter Jones, a young mixed-blood, son of a white father and an Indian mother. The father, after hearing the Methodist preachers, was converted, and sent his son to school, where he mastered the usual rudiments of an English education. In 1823 he became acquainted with Seth Crawford, and heard Edmund Stoney preach on the subject of the new birth. Later he went with his sister to a camp-meeting on the Ancaster circuit, and while listening to the sermons, "I began," he said, "to feel very sick in my heart. . . . I thought the blackcoats knew all that was in my heart, and that I was the person addressed. . . . In spite of my Indian heart, tears flowed down my cheeks at the remembrance of my sins." At midnight he went to his tent and fell asleep; but soon two of the preachers came and awoke him, saying his sister was converted, and he must return to the prayer-meeting. Here he found his sister rejoicing in the Lord. Continuing in prayer till day-dawn he was enabled to trust in the mercy of God revealed in Christ Jesus. "That very instant," said Peter, "my burden was removed; joy unspeakable filled my heart, and I could say, Abba, Father. . . . Everything now appeared in a new light, and all the works of God seemed to unite with me in uttering the praises of the Lord." Soon after a little class was formed by Alvin Torry, at the house of Chief Davis, among whom were Peter Jones and his sister, and put in charge of Seth Crawford, and some wonderful displays of saving power occurred. On Torry's return from Conference in June, twenty were admitted as members of the society. A gracious work began on another part of the reservation,

where both whites and Indians were converted and a society formed. No wonder that Torry writes: "In weariness my mind is comforted and my soul is delighted in feeding these hungry natives with the provisions of the gospel. Oh, I could endure hunger, or sit down thankfully to their humble fare, or lie down in Indian wigwams all my life, to be employed in such a work as this, and especially if favoured with such consolations as at times I have enjoyed since I commenced my labours on this mission."

In 1825 a camp-meeting was held at Mount Pleasant, a few miles from where the city of Brantford now stands, and was especially noteworthy for a number of conversions among the Mississaguas. These Indians were notoriously the most drunken and filthy in the country, the very lowest of the low, and yet they received the gospel more readily than others, and its transforming power among them was wonderful. Up to this time they had depended upon hunting and fishing for their precarious livelihood; now they began to clear and cultivate the soil, and to live in settled homes in a Christian fashion. In the summer of 1825 the Mississaguas were notified by the Indian agent to assemble at the river Credit, about thirteen miles west of York, to receive their customary annual presents and payments for the surrender of their lands. On the Sunday following their arrival Peter Jones preached to an audience of three hundred, whites and Indians, first in Ojibway and then in English. The power of God came down upon some of the Indians, and they fell to the ground, some crying for pardon, and others rejoicing in the Lord. Next day the Indians repaired to

the Humber River, twelve miles nearer York. Many heathen were assembled, besides the Christians from the Grand River, and were met by the Indian agent, Col. Givens. Archdeacon Strachan, who had come out to see the Christian Indians, heard the children sing some hymns, and afterwards heard two read from the New Testament and others from a schoolbook. He spoke to them kindly, advising them to settle on their lands at the Credit, promised them assistance from the Government, and then prayed with them. The Indians agreed, and this was the origin of the Indian settlement on the Credit, which became a noted Methodist mission, and so continued till the Indians moved to the New Credit on the Six Nations' Reserve.

When the Christian Indians returned to the Grand River they were accompanied by a large number of pagans, some of whom were already awakened. On the following Sunday Alvin Torry preached, with Peter Jones as interpreter, and the word of the Lord was with power. As the result of that day's services forty-five were publicly baptized. Torry was much impressed with the spirit and ability of Peter Jones. "He is a youth," he said, "of much promise to his nation and the Church, and his labours are a continual blessing to his people." Knowing that there were bands of Indians on the river Thames who had not heard the gospel, Torry and Jones agreed to visit them. One band was known as Moravians, because a Moravian missionary resided among them, and a few scattered ones were remnants of the Delawares who had been taught by David Brainerd and some Moravian missionaries in the United States. The rest were pagans. The first to show

an interest in these neglected Indians was John Carey, a pious school teacher, and it was at his request that Alvin Torry and Peter Jones came to visit them. On this first visit the missionary and his interpreter spent five days, with scant food and sleep, and travelled sixty miles on foot through the wilderness. Subsequent visits were made, and by degrees the gospel was introduced among the Indians of the Thames. At the Conference of 1825 the first Annual Report of the Missionary Society was presented. The meeting was addressed by Chief Thomas Davis and Peter Jones, and there was much joy among the brethren because a great and effectual door unto the heathen had been opened. At the same Conference Elder Case, who was deeply interested in the evangelization of the Indian tribes, was transferred to the Bay of Quinte district. In the following winter he requested Peter Jones and Chief John Crane to visit the Indians in the vicinity of Belleville and back of Kingston. In the spring Peter Jones repeated his visit, and as a result of services held Case baptized twenty-two Indian converts, while perhaps fifty more were earnestly seeking the Lord. Among the converts was John Sunday, who became a faithful and useful missionary among his people.

Space will not admit of further details of this most interesting work. Suffice it to say that after the first union with the British Conference in 1833 the work was extended and strengthened; and when the second union was consummated in 1847 a real forward movement began. Missions were opened in the Hudson's Bay Territory at Norway House, Oxford House, and other points. James Evans, of precious memory, was stationed

at Norway House, where he founded one of the most successful missions in the whole field. To him belongs the distinguished honour of having invented and perfected a system of syllabic characters, so simple and yet so comprehensive that an Indian of ordinary intelligence can begin, after two weeks' teaching, to read the Scriptures in his own tongue. In succeeding years grand work was done in those distant regions by Charles Stringfellow, Henry Steinhauer (a converted Indian, two of whose sons are now missionaries to their people), Robert Brooking, George M'Dougall (whose son John is now Superintendent of Indian Missions in the North-West), Egerton R. Young, John Semmens, and others. In the far West, near the Rocky Mountains, Robert Rundle introduced the gospel among the Mountain Stonies with blessed effect; Thomas Wooley and Henry Steinhauer were sent to labour among the Crees; and soon the M'Dougalls, father and son, entered the same field. In early days of mission work in British Columbia the Indians were not entirely neglected. White, Robson, Browning, and Pollard did what they could; but they were so occupied with the work among the whites that they had scant time to spare for anything else. Some pious laymen in Victoria interested themselves in the degraded tribes, and a few were won to a better life.

At this time a letter from Edward White was published in the *Christian Guardian*, telling of the destitute condition of the Indians and pleading for someone to go and teach them. The letter came under the eye of an ardent young Methodist in Ontario, Thomas Crosby by name, and his heart was fired to respond to the call. He

borrowed from a friend enough money to pay the expenses of the long journey, and went forth trusting in God. Near the coal-mining town of Nanaimo was a band of Flathead Indians, and among these he began his work, gathering the children in a school and speaking to the adults when he had opportunity. The Chinook—a jargon used by the tribes for trading purposes—was easily acquired, but it was a wretchedly poor vehicle for conveying religious truth. A knowledge of the Flathead tongue, which Crosby laboured diligently to master, enabled him to work to better advantage, and by his efforts, in association with others, some of the Indians were savingly converted. Among these was a lad named David Sallasselton, who early displayed such burning zeal for the salvation of his people, and such wonderful gifts as a speaker, that the missionaries encouraged him in every way. Though perhaps not more than sixteen years of age when converted, his natural gifts of oratory were such that his fame spread all over the adjacent country, and he became known among the white people as the Morley Punshon of the Pacific coast. His zeal was equal to his gifts, and finally carried him beyond his strength. No labours were too great, no journeys too difficult, if only he could reach his people with the message of salvation. In his zeal to reach an appointment he crossed a stream amid floating ice, and though wet and chilled conducted a service. A severe cold followed, which settled on his lungs and ultimately terminated his life. But he died in holy triumph.

Every year large numbers of Indians came down from the North to catch salmon in the Fraser River or pick

hops in the fields of Oregon, and Victoria was a common stopping-place both going and returning. Here some Indians from Port Simpson found their way to a building where some pious laymen were holding meetings, and two or three were converted. These at once began to plead for a missionary. After some negotiation, and a visit to the place by the chairman of the district, Thomas Crosby volunteered for the service, and was sent accordingly. On reaching his distant field, seven hundred miles north of Victoria, he called the people together, told them who he was and why he had come. Then he told them they must have a house built in which to worship the Great Spirit, and learn about His Son Jesus Christ, and asked them to give whatever they could to help build the house. With strange readiness they responded to the call, and in the shape of guns, blankets, silver ornaments, and money, that assemblage of heathen contributed to the value of over $400 to aid in building a house for the worship of One who to them was as yet "the unknown God." Surely, thought the missionary, these people are ripe for the gospel; and so it proved. A commodious church was built with aid from the Mission Rooms, and a revival followed, in which scores were converted. Quickly the news spread in all directions, and this was the form in which the message went from village to village up and down the coast and away into the far interior: "A great light has come to Port Simpson, and they have built a wonderful house for God." Large numbers of Indians came from all directions to see and hear for themselves, and these in turn carried back the tidings to distant villages, saying that the half had not been told them.

Nor was this the only gracious visitation that Port Simpson enjoyed. On one occasion a remarkable revival broke out apparently without any human agency. Mr. Crosby had gone to visit outlying villages on a tour that would last several weeks. After his departure the Holy Spirit began to work mightily among the people. In the middle of the night several Indians went to the mission house, awoke the inmates, and asked Mrs. Crosby to give them the key of the church. Thinking it best to manifest no surprise, she gave them the key and they went away. Mrs. Crosby then lit a lantern and asked the lady who taught the school to accompany her to the church, that they might see what the Indians were doing. Softly opening the door, they saw by the light of the lantern some scores of Indians kneeling on the floor in the dark, and with sighs and tears pleading with God for salvation. For many days and nights in succession did those faithful women carry on the services, and by the time Mr. Crosby returned it seemed as though the whole village had been profoundly moved. During and after some of these wonderful outpourings, bands of young men would take canoes and start off, in some cases scores of miles, to tell the people of other villages of the good news of salvation, and in this way the gospel was carried to many who otherwise would never have heard it. Since then permanent missions have been established at many points and are still in successful operation. As the direct result of missionary effort among the Indians of British Columbia tribal wars have entirely ceased, heathen villages have been transformed into Christian communities, and the gross immoralities of the dance and the "potlatch" have given

place to assemblies for Christian instruction and sacred song. In the North-West similar results have been achieved, and it has been demonstrated that the advancement of the native tribes in intelligence, in morality, in loyalty, and in the arts of civilised life, keeps even step with the progress of Christian missions. Very significant is the fact that during the second revolt among certain Indians and half-breeds in 1885, led by Louis Riel and Chief Big Bear, not one Indian member or adherent of the Methodist Church was implicated in the disturbance, and it is a well known fact that the unswerving loyalty of the Christian Indians—notably Chief Pakan and his people at Whitefish Lake—contributed more than any other circumstance to prevent a general uprising of the Cree nation. At the present time there are 61 Indian missions under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Church, with 43 missionaries, 14 assistants, 28 teachers, and 7 interpreters—a total of 92. Besides the ordinary day schools there are 6 industrial institutes and boarding schools, with accommodation for about 500 pupils. The membership returns from the Indian missions for 1901–2 show an aggregate of 5,286.

3. An interesting though not remarkably successful department of the Church's work is that among the French in the province of Quebec. In that province there is a French-speaking population of over a million and a quarter, and these, with the exception of a few thousands, are adherents of the most solid, thoroughly organised, and aggressive type of Romanism to be found in the world. The church is virtually endowed, can collect its tithes and levy its church-building rates by

law. Education is controlled by the bishops, and the whole machinery is used to maintain the use of the French language and inculcate a French national spirit. As regards religion, evangelical truth is a thing almost unknown. Such a population, under such control, constitutes a serious problem, and it has led the various Protestant Churches to make some effort to spread the gospel among them. So far as Methodist missions are concerned, numerical results have been small; but it should be borne in mind that the difficulties to be surmounted are greater than in any other field, and that there are causes for the comparatively small numerical increase which do not exist elsewhere. Neither in the home, the Indian, nor even in the foreign field, do civil or social disabilities follow to the same extent a profession of faith in Christ; but in the province of Quebec a renunciation of Romanism is the signal for a series of petty persecutions and a degree of civil and social ostracism which many have not sufficient nerve to endure, and which usually results in their emigration from the province. The difficulty of reaching the people by direct evangelistic effort has led the Board of Missions to give increased attention to educational work. In pursuance of this policy, a commodious building has been erected in a western suburb of Montreal, capable of accommodating one hundred resident pupils. Over seventy pupils of both sexes are now in attendance, and the future of the institute is promising.

4. During the past thirty years large numbers of Chinese have landed on the Pacific coast of the American continent, and some thousands have found temporary

homes in British Columbia. In 1884 Mr. John Dillon, a merchant of Montreal, visited the Pacific coast on business, and his heart was stirred by the spiritually destitute condition of the Chinese, especially in Victoria. He wrote to a member of the Board of Missions inquiring if something could not be done. The matter was considered at the next board meeting, and it was decided to open a mission in Victoria as soon as a suitable agent could be found. In the following spring, by a remarkable chain of providences, the way was fully opened, and a mission begun which has since extended to other places in the province, and has been fruitful of good results. Commodious mission buildings have been erected in Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster, and Nanaimo, and schools established in all these cities; many converts have been received by baptism, and the foundation of a spiritual church laid among these strangers "from the land of Sinim" which gives promise of permanence and growth. Work has also been established among the Japanese in the Pacific province, and native workers have been raised up who are rendering faithful and efficient service. Throughout British Columbia there is a strong prejudice against both Chinese and Japanese, and this is diligently fostered by the labour organisations; but it is none the less the duty of the Church to seek the evangelization of these outsiders who by the providence of God have been brought to our shores. If these people are a menace to our civilisation, the danger is enormously lessened by their conversion to Christianity; and when truly converted, as many of them are, they are not behind their white neighbours in showing forth the fruits of the Spirit.

5. While giving careful attention to the religious needs of the home population, the Indian tribes of Ontario, the North-West, and British Columbia, it was not until 1873 that Canadian Methodism decided to enter the foreign field. Dr. Punshon had repeatedly pressed upon the attention of the board the great value of foreign missions in quickening the missionary zeal and deepening the spiritual life of the Church at home, and there were others who shared his convictions on that point. The project was new, the claims of the home work were urgent, but the faith and courage of those who urged the venture—if venture it was—have been fully vindicated by the results. After much anxious consultation and prayer it was decided to begin a mission in Japan. This most interesting nation, which for centuries had been hermetically sealed against the world, had suddenly opened its gates, and missionaries from various churches were already entering the field. It is true the former edicts against Christianity had not been withdrawn; popular prejudice against everything foreign was still very strong, and those who volunteered for missionary service took their lives in their hands. But the old heroic spirit was not dead in the Church, and when the call came for men to enter an open but dangerous door, there were no signs of hesitation. From a number of available men the choice fell upon the Rev. George Cochran, D.D., and the Rev. Davidson Macdonald, M.D., and they were sent forth with earnest prayers to found the first foreign mission of Canadian Methodism. The results proved the wisdom of the choice. The difficulties encountered were many and great, and the missionaries

had to proceed with the utmost caution; but in the end faith and patience had their reward. Difficulties were surmounted; prejudice and suspicion were allayed; and the two missionaries gained a hold upon the confidence and sympathy of the people that has not been shaken to this day. In after-years, when the mission was in full operation, a volunteer from another church was on his way to begin work in Japan. On board the steamship he met a missionary of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States who was returning after a year's furlough. Naturally the new recruit was anxious to profit by the experience of his fellow-passenger, and asked many questions about the country and the people, and the best methods of carrying on missionary work. In one of their conversations, when touching on the latter point, the Episcopal missionary said in substance, "I do not think I can give you better advice than to study the work and methods of the Canada Methodist Mission. Their work has been conducted with singular tact and skill."

In 1889 it was found that the growth of the work in Japan had been such as to justify reorganisation and an increased measure of autonomy. Accordingly an Annual Conference was formed which now embraces 5 districts, 25 circuits, with many out-stations, and a membership of 2,636. This is altogether apart from the work of the Women's Missionary Society, which is a very important factor. The two brethren who founded the mission are no longer connected with it. Dr. Cochran, after many years of valuable service, returned home in failing health, and since then has passed to his eternal

rest; but in Japan, among the native Christians, the students he trained, the converts he won, his name is "as ointment poured forth." Dr. Macdonald, the "beloved physician," still resides in Tokyo, honoured by natives and foreigners alike, and trusted by the Japanese to a degree to which a foreigner seldom attains.

For several years previous to 1900, leading men in the Church were asking if the time had not come when the Methodist Church should survey the vast field of unevangelized heathendom with the view of extending the foreign work. The suggestion took practical shape at the General Conference of 1890, when the project of a new foreign mission was commended to the General Board of Missions, with authority to take such action as might seem to be desirable. When the question came up in the General Board it became evident that the suggestion was not premature. With practical unanimity the board affirmed the desirableness of at once occupying new ground, and as concurring providences seemed to point to China, the Executive Committee was authorised to take all necessary steps to give effect to the decision of the board. After careful consideration, the province of Sz' Chuan in West China was selected as a promising field. The Rev. V. C. Hart, D.D., who for twenty years had superintended the missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Central China, was secured as leader of the new enterprise, and with him was associated the Rev. George E. Hartwell, B.A., B.D., with O. L. Kilborn, M.A., M.D., and D. W. Stevenson, M.D., as medical missionaries. The Women's Missionary Society also decided to enter the field, and two lady missionaries—Dr. Retta Gifford and Miss Brackbill—

were appointed. In the spring of 1892 the missionaries reached their distant field, and for three years pursued their work with faith and patience, chiefly in the cities of Chentu and Kiating. Then came the riots, during which all the mission property was destroyed, and the missionaries barely escaped with their lives. For a time the mission was completely broken up, but ultimately the missionaries returned and resumed their interrupted work. Everything continued peaceful till the time of the Boxer uprising, when circumstances became so threatening that the missionaries were strongly urged by the British Consul at Chungking to leave the province and make their way to the coast, which they succeeded in doing. After an interval of a year and a half the missionaries again returned, found the premises intact, and once more resumed their work. As this is written there are rumours of fresh disturbances in many parts of the empire, and no one can predict what a day in China may bring forth; but our missionaries are in God's keeping, and living or dying they are the Lord's.

There are eight missionaries of the Methodist Church in Canada now labouring in West China, and an equal number under the control of the Women's Missionary Society. Beside the directly evangelistic work, there are three hospitals and a printing and publishing house, which is taxed to its utmost resources to supply the demand. There is a widespread and urgent call, chiefly among the student class, for instruction in the English language and in Western science, and the number who ask instruction from our missionaries is far greater than they are able to accommodate. If only the Church were able to send the

needed reinforcements, a great harvest might be reaped in West China.

Such is, in brief, an outline of the story of mission work connected with the Methodist Church in Canada; a story abounding in thrilling incidents and wonderful triumphs of redeeming grace, which there is not space to record. But perhaps enough has been written to show that the Methodist Church, in its origin, history, and traditions, is "essentially missionary," and that its providential mission, in co-operation with other branches of Methodism, is to spread scriptural holiness all over the world. If the spirit of this mission is maintained, her career will be one of ever-spreading conquest. If it is suffered to decline, Ichabod will be written upon her ruined walls.

VII

THE UNIFICATION OF CANADIAN METHODISM

In the early sixties there was a complete dead-lock in Canadian politics. For this the system which gave equal representation to Upper and Lower Canada in the Parliament of the two provinces was in part responsible, and the system of party government was responsible for the rest. A general election took place in 1861, and when Parliament met in the following March party strife was renewed with vigour. The American Civil War was now in progress, and the position of the Canadian Government was critical owing to complications between Great Britain and the United States growing out of the *Trent* imbroglio. The British Government, besides sending some of its choice regiments and large munitions of war to Canada, undertook extensive military works at Quebec, with the understanding that the cost of works at Montreal and places west would be defrayed from the provincial treasury. There was a somewhat general feeling that the cost would be beyond the ability of the provinces to sustain, while many regarded the whole thing as a war-scare, for which there was not sufficient justification. In the Legislature a Government Militia Bill was introduced, which was vigorously opposed,

resulting in an adverse vote, whereupon the Cartier-Macdonald ministry resigned. Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald was called to form a new cabinet, which he succeeded in doing, and announced as leading features of his policy the double majority principle in all matters affecting locally either province, a readjustment of representation, and an increase of revenue and protection of manufacturers by a revised customs tariff. When Parliament assembled, agitation for the increased representation of Upper Canada was renewed, but was defeated by the Lower Canada vote. Afterward the Government was defeated on a straight vote of want of confidence, and at once appealed to the country. In the new Parliament the Government had a majority of only three, and in 1864, finding themselves without a working majority, resigned. Sir E. P. Taché succeeded in forming a new cabinet, but within three months it also was defeated.

The dead-lock was now at its worst. Parties were so evenly balanced that neither of them could carry on the Government alone, and a dissolution of the House and change of ministry failed to improve the situation. At this juncture a federation of all the British American provinces, as a solution of existing difficulties, began to assume form and substance. The Government leaders approached the Opposition leaders with proposals for a coalition ministry to carry out the scheme, and this was hailed with general satisfaction, as the people were weary of bitter and fruitless party strife. Conferences were held with representatives of the maritime provinces, and in 1865 the Canadian Parliament adopted the Confederation

scheme. At first there was intense opposition in the East. At a general election in New Brunswick not one of those who had been delegated to the inter-provincial Conference at Quebec was re-elected. The opposition in Nova Scotia was equally strong; but the Imperial Government favoured the measure, and ultimately the tide of popular feeling in the maritime provinces turned in favour of federation. On the 1st of July 1867 the Confederation Act, known as the British North American Act, which had been passed by the Imperial Parliament, went into effect, and the confederated provinces assumed a position among the nations as the Dominion of Canada. The Dominion comprised the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada (now designated respectively Ontario and Quebec), New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia; and provision was made for the future admission of Prince Edward Island, the Hudson's Bay Territory, British Columbia, and Newfoundland. With the exception of the last-named colony, all the outlying territories have been admitted, and the Dominion extends, without a break, from ocean to ocean and from the American boundary to the Arctic Sea.

The spirit of consolidation was now in the air, and the example set in the political realm may have influenced the churches. It is true that in one instance action in the churches antedated any similar movement in the field of politics, for in 1861 a union was effected between the United Presbyterian and Free Churches; but this embraced only two branches of the same denomination, and its scope in other respects was confined to Upper and Lower Canada. Fourteen years later a far more comprehensive

measure was successfully carried through, which united all the Presbyterian forces, with the exception of a very few isolated congregations, throughout the whole Dominion. Since then the growth of the Presbyterian Church has been one of the marked religious features in the country's history, and to-day it stands, in point of numbers, foremost among the Protestant Churches of the Dominion, Methodism alone excepted.

Some years before the second union in the Presbyterian ranks took place, the question of the unification of Canadian Methodism began to attract attention; but before this certain events took place which, as far as the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada was concerned, helped to pave the way for a scheme of unification, though not so understood at the time save by a few. The Canada Conference having requested the appointment of the Rev. William Morley Punshon, M.A., as its President, the British Conference of 1867 concurred, and the appointment was made. During the spring and early summer of that year Dr. Ryerson was in England, and was so impressed with the benefits that might accrue to Canadian Methodism from a visit of Mr. Punshon that he wrote him on the subject, and solicited the influence of others to the same end. When news of the invitation and appointment received confirmation, Mr. Punshon wrote to Dr. Ryerson as follows: "All our affairs are in higher hands than ours; and if by God's over-ruling providence I shall be assured of welcome in Canada, and enabled to work for Christ on that continent, which I have so often longed to see, I shall regard the disruption of all older ties, and the sacrifice of personal position in

this country, as a small price to pay; the more if I can aid in the establishment of a grand Methodist confederacy which shall be one of the great spiritual powers in the New World." The last sentence indicates very clearly that as early as 1867 the thought of a united Methodism for Canada was taking shape in leading minds on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact, the Canadian Conference had adopted a resolution in favour of union as early as 1866, and repeated the same in 1870 in the following terms:

"1. That this Conference cordially reiterates the expression of its conviction as to the desirableness and importance of a union of all the Methodist bodies in Canada who believe in the same doctrines, sing the same hymns, have the same form of worship, the same love-feasts, the same prayer and class meetings, and the same general rules of society.

"2. That the Conference reappoint a committee, consisting of an equal number of ministers and laymen, to confer with any similar committee or committees appointed by other Methodist bodies on the subject of union, and report to the next Conference."

Dr. Punshon returned to England before the dream of union was fulfilled, but during a stay of six years in Canada his noble Catholic spirit, unrivalled pulpit oratory, comprehensive grasp of affairs, and skill in guiding important connexional interests, not only conspired to secure for Methodism a degree of social influence beyond anything it had previously enjoyed, but were important factors in creating a spirit and temper through the whole Connexion that prepared the way for a calm and sympathetic

consideration of the union question when it came within the sphere of practical church politics.

While most of the Methodist bodies in Canada had for several years given more or less attention to the subject of union, to the Episcopal Methodist Church belongs the honour of being the first to show its faith by its works. As early as 1833, as we have already seen, a union was effected with the missionaries of the British Wesleyan Conference in Upper Canada; and although this was dissolved in 1840, it was resumed again in 1847, and from that time continued unbroken. The Methodist New Connexion was the next to put its theory into practice. Its missions had been established for some time in the lower province, and in 1837 the Rev. John Addyman was sent from England to establish a mission in Upper Canada. While prosecuting researches with this end in view, he repeatedly met with ministers and members of what was known as the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist Church. This was a body formed by Elder Henry Ryan, who seceded from the Episcopal Methodist Church in Canada in 1829, the year after the latter body had been constituted an independent church, separate from the jurisdiction of the bishops in the United States. Mr. Addyman found that the principles and polity of the two churches closely resembled each other, and a union was proposed. A basis was adopted and sent to the quarterly official boards in Canada, and also of the Executive of the Methodist New Connexion in England. After negotiations extending over several years, the desired union was effected in 1847, and the united body adopted the name of "The Canadian Wesleyan Methodist New Connexion." Three years

later another union was formed with the Protestant Methodists, a small community in Eastern Canada of whom history gives no account, numbering, it was said, about five hundred and fifty members. All this indicates that from 1837 the Methodist New Connexion Church had favoured the policy of consolidation. The same might be said of other Methodist bodies; but down to 1870, or thereabout, the policy had been theoretical rather than practical. At that period it began to assume more tangible form. Committees were appointed by all the Methodist churches, and a meeting was held in Toronto in March 1871. A series of resolutions were adopted, affirming the desirability of union, and recommending a basis covering the main points that had been discussed in the joint committee. When the report came before the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, in June 1871, the following items were adopted;

"That this meeting deems a union of the different Methodist bodies in this country, upon such principles as may be agreed upon by the said bodies, highly desirable.

"That in the opinion of this meeting a scheme of union to be generally accepted should embrace the following points:

"1. That a General Conference should be formed, to meet say once in four years, having power to make rules and regulations for the whole Church, subject to such restrictions as may be mutually agreed upon by the several uniting Methodist churches, acting according to the provisions of their own constitutions.

"2. That if on an appeal to the quarterly meetings

of the Connexion—which shall take place before next Conference—it shall appear that there is a strong wish on the part of our people for direct legislative representation in a General Conference, rather than to retain the indirect but ultimate and decisive veto power on legislation which they now possess, this Conference, in view—and in view only—of the proposed union, will not let this question stand in bar; provided always that there be no interference with the recognition of the ministerial order and office, with the ministerial power of stationing ministers, and with the ministerial privilege of trial by their own peers."

Consideration of the remaining portion of the report of the Union Committee was postponed, and the following resolution was adopted:

"That the Conference has heard with pleasure the report of the united committees appointed on the practicability of a union of the various Methodist bodies in this province, and rejoices in the manifestation of a growing desire for combined effort and united brotherly ministerial influence, for the more speedy and effectual diffusion of the blessings of our common Christianity. As this movement is intimately connected with the sympathies and privileges of the laity of our Church, and especially with the members of the quarterly meetings, therefore be it resolved, in order wisely to accomplish an object so desirable, which involves such grave and important subjects, the proposal be again remitted to the consideration of a committee to be appointed for the purpose."

The desirability of uniting the Methodism of Eastern

British America with that of Ontario and Quebec having received more or less consideration, it was resolved:

"That the Conference of Eastern British America be invited to appoint a deputation to meet with the committee appointed by this Conference, with a view to the union or confederation of the whole Wesleyan Methodist work in British America."

It will be seen that the proposed basis received only a qualified approval from the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and the same may be affirmed respecting the action of the Methodist New Connexion. At the Conference of 1871 the basis was accepted "in the main . . . as moderate and fair to all branches of the Methodist churches"; but exception was taken to one clause, and it was recommended that it "be so altered as to make no distinction in the class of business to be taken up by district meetings, composed, as laid down, of equal numbers of ministers and laymen."

It would appear, however, that the resolutions adopted by the Union Committees in 1871 were not satisfactory to some of the bodies concerned, and from that time forward the joint committee was composed exclusively of representatives from the Wesleyan Methodist and New Connexion Conferences. During the Conference year ending 1872 no meetings of the committee were held, but the question of lay representation in the proposed General Conference was submitted to the quarterly meetings, and their action was now reported. In the Wesleyan Methodist Church the total number of quarterly meetings voting was three hundred and sixty-four, and as these gave a con-

siderable majority in favour of the basis beyond the two thirds required, the question of union, so far as the laity was concerned, was practically settled. A resolution adopted by the Methodist New Connexion Conference was also reported as follows:

"That having considered the subject of Methodist union, this Conference would renew its expression as to the desirableness of an organic union of the various Methodist bodies of Canada; and while adhering to the action of our last Conference in regard to the basis recommended by the united committee, this Conference feels bound to say that we could not accept any scheme of union by which restrictions would be imposed upon the legislative powers of a General Conference, or upon the right of the laity to co-operate with the ministry in such Conference in all acts of legislation and discipline."

In reference to this deliverance the committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference reported as follows:

"It is the opinion of your committee that the course taken by the Wesleyan Conference on the subject of union affords to other Methodist bodies evidence of its sincere desire to lead the pending negotiations to a practicable scheme of union; and your committee recommend the Conference to reaffirm its resolution of last year on the desirability of union, and to appoint a committee to confer with representatives of the Methodist New Connexion, and with any committee or committees appointed by any of the Methodist bodies who accept the general basis laid down by the united committee, and to report to the ensuing Conference."

As there was a measure of uncertainty respecting

the final action of the New Connexion Conference in regard to union, the committee of the Wesleyan Conference deemed it desirable to communicate separately with the representatives of the Conference of Eastern British America. This was done during 1871, and at the Conference of 1872 the following resolutions were reported and adopted:

"1. That we have heard with great satisfaction the statements of the Rev. Humphrey Pickard, D.D., and the Rev. Duncan D. Currie, in reference to the practicability of a union between the Canadian and Eastern British American Conferences, and we rejoice to find that the hindrances in the way are comparatively slight, and are of such a nature that they may be easily overcome.

"2. That this committee recommends to the Conference the propriety of taking immediate steps to consummate a federal union with the brethren in Eastern British America, being convinced that such a step would tend to strengthen and consolidate Methodism, and promote the work of God through the whole of British America."

During the following year decided progress was made, and when the Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church assembled in London in 1873, the report of the committee on the division of the Conference and a federal union with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in British America was ready for discussion. The report, as amended and adopted by the Conference, made provision for a General Conference, with lay representation if desired by the quarterly meetings of the two bodies; the division of the work in Ontario and Quebec into three Annual

Conferences; the transfer of ministers, and various matters pertaining to the temporal economy of the Church. At the same Conference the report of the Union Committees appointed by the Wesleyan Methodist and New Connexion Conferences was received and carefully considered. It indicated that meetings of the joint committee had been held on 1st and 2nd days of October 1872, on the 30th and 31st days of January 1873, and on the 9th and 10th days of April 1873, and that a basis had been reached, embodied in certain declarations of agreement, covering substantially the same ground as the agreement with the Conference of Eastern British America. Some modifications in matters of detail were adopted, but nothing affecting fundamental principles, and the way now seemed to be clear for giving effect to the union measure. It was seen, however, that the action taken must inevitably change the relation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church to the parent body in England, and the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"This Conference, having considered the reports of the joint committee appointed by this Conference and the Conference of Eastern British America to prepare a basis of union of these Conferences into one Connexion or Church, and having nearly brought its labours to a close, thereby initiating a movement which may somewhat alter the relations we have hitherto sustained to the British Conference, cannot allow the inauguration of the measure proposed without expressing our deep and grateful sense of indebtedness for the liberal support and paternal care shown toward us by the parent body during the many years of our past history. We devoutly pray that upon

our fathers and brethren of the British Connexion and upon ourselves may continue to rest the peculiar favour of the Great Head of the Church, and that the strongest ties which should exist between the different branches of the same great Christian family may continue to unite us in uninterrupted harmony until the whole design of the mediatorial reign of Christ shall have been accomplished to the glory of His holy name."

The action of the Canadian churches having been reported to the parent bodies in England, and duly sanctioned by their respective Conferences, the way was now open for the formal consummation of the proposed union. In accordance with the provisions of the basis that had been adopted, a delegated General Conference, consisting of ninety-eight ministers and ninety-four laymen, assembled in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, on the 16th day of September 1874, and was organised by the election of the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, D.D., LL.D., as President; the Rev. George Douglas, LL.D., Vice-President; and the Rev. Duncan D. Currie, Secretary. The spirit that animated the Conference throughout was all that could be desired, and the proceedings, from first to last, were characterised by harmony and brotherly love. On the second day of the session, a special committee appointed to consider documents referring to the union, and certain resolutions that had been adopted in relation thereto, presented a report. This report embodied the basis of union, as adopted by the joint committee and confirmed by the Annual Conferences of the uniting bodies, to which was added the resolutions of the British Wesleyan Conference and the Methodist New Connexion

Conference in England giving formal sanction to the proposed union. The report having been read, the following resolution, after referring to the successive steps that had been taken, was adopted by a unanimous vote:

"*Resolved*—That this General Conference do now proceed to deliberate upon and adopt such measures as may best conduce to the interests and good government of the Methodist Church of Canada,[1] and to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom."

Thus the union which had been the subject of prolonged discussion, and the occasion of no small anxiety and many prayers, was happily consummated, and when the Conference adjourned there was a prevailing spirit of hopefulness throughout the Church that augured well for the future. If any forebodings were felt they were soon allayed, for there was no friction anywhere, and before long there were reports of blessed revivals in many parts of the Connexion. At the end of the first quadrennium, the six Annual Conferences, into which the Church has been divided, were able to report a net increase of 134 ministers, 20,659 members, 221 Sunday schools, and 19,754 scholars.

During the quadrennium which intervened between the General Conference of 1874 and 1878 no action was taken in regard to union with those Methodist bodies that still maintained a separate organisation, and at the Conference of 1878 there was no formal deliverance on the subject; but in replying to the fraternal address from the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church

[1] This was the official designation of the united Church as adopted by the Conference.

in Canada there were utterances which indicated that the General Conference of the recently united bodies had not abandoned the hope of a wider federation among those who agreed in so many things and differed in so few; as witness the following from the reply referred to:

"Though our external organisation as a church differs slightly from yours, there is much that we have in common. We are subjects of the same noble Queen, sharers of the same constitutional rights and privileges which all good citizens in our free and glorious country enjoy, heirs of a heritage secured to us by the sturdy independence, unceasing industry, indomitable courage, and high-principled piety of our forefathers. Before us lies a future as full of reward as the present is of promise. As fellow-Christians and members of the great family of Methodism we have a moral heritage, and work committed to us which angels might covet. Nor should it be forgotten that our doctrines are the same wherever Methodism exists. No differences of organisation, no readjustments of modern thought, have led to a single modification of our creed. The articles of faith taught in our homes, our Sabbath schools, our theological halls, are such as we can proclaim without reservation before the world. May it be our glory to believe and preach them fully and freely."

It is more than probable that the marked results following the union of 1874, and the rapid growth of the united Church during the first quadrennium, revived in many minds a desire that a union might be brought about embracing all the branches of Canadian Methodism; but before tracing the growth of this sentiment there is one subject which engaged the attention of the Conference of

1878 which claims more than a passing reference. At the Conference of 1874 a committee of eighteen members was appointed "to revise and prepare the materials for a new hymn-book, to be submitted for consideration on the opening of the next General Conference." The committee held its first meeting in the city of Quebec on the 17th day of July 1878, and continued in session until the 23rd of the same month. Of the eighteen members appointed only ten were present, and these were exclusively ministers. Before proceeding to the actual work of revision, certain principles were adopted that might guide the committee in their difficult task. To revise a hymn-book, a large part of which had been compiled by Wesley himself, and around which clustered the sacred associations of a hundred years, was felt to be a delicate undertaking. It was agreed, therefore, that each hymn should be read aloud verse by verse; that no hymn should be omitted, abridged, or changed in any way by less than a two thirds vote of the committee; and that no change whatever should be made in the hymns which, by long and frequent use, had endeared themselves to the Methodist people. It was also agreed that, in the selection of new hymns, particular attention should be given to increase the number suitable for public worship and for special occasions, and that in such selections regard should be had to doctrinal soundness and lyrical harmony.

A careful examination of the existing hymn-book revealed the fact that a considerable number of the hymns were rarely or never sung in any of the congregations—some because they were unsuitable for public worship, and some because of their great length; and it was concluded

that any hymn which after a test of one hundred years had proved itself unsuitable for use in public worship, had thereby forfeited its claim to a place in the psalmody of the Church, and might very safely be omitted. In regard to hymns good in themselves, but too long for use in public worship, a remedy was sought in one of three ways: By omitting one or more of the weaker or less used verses where this could be done without breaking the connexion; by dividing the hymn into two when the sentiment would admit of it; by arranging in first and second parts without separate numbers.

It was also found that there were verses, and occasionally entire hymns, referring to the crucifixion of our Saviour that were objectionable on account of their extreme literalness, undue and therefore misleading prominence being given to the physical sufferings of the Lord —to the scourging, the piercing nail, the crown of thorns —as though these constituted the main aspects of the atonement. It was deemed advisable that such hymns or verses should be omitted. Again, in not a few hymns expressions were found that had become obsolete, or at least were not used in the same sense as formerly. Where these expressions could not be replaced by suitable words the verse was omitted. A very few hymns were found to be objectionable on doctrinal grounds. This may excite surprise, but an explanation is found in the fact that at one period the Wesleys, in the plenitude of their charity and for the sake of peace, made large concessions to those who differed from them in regard to unconditional election and the extent of the atonement, concessions which afterwards led John Wesley to ask in Conference, "Have we

not leaned too much to Calvinism?" Traces of this excessive charity still lingered in a few hymns, even in Wesley's collection, while one or two had crept into the supplement in which some of the most dangerous errors of Plymouthism were expressed or implied. It was felt that in a hymn-book which claimed to be a "body of experimental and practical divinity," it was needful to exercise great care in the matter of doctrinal teaching, and that the wiser course was to omit such hymns and stanzas as gave even an uncertain sound on the cardinal doctrines of Holy Scripture.

As a result of very careful revision, the committee decided to recommend the omission from the existing hymn-book of about one hundred and thirty entire hymns, and of verses equalling in the aggregate about seventy-five more. This made it possible to select over two hundred new hymns from the best available sources; and when the whole was properly arranged and classified, a hymn-book was produced which, for purposes of public and social worship and private devotion, is believed to be excelled by no other collection, and equalled by very few. In 1878 the work was not quite completed, but the Conference was so well satisfied with what had been done that a resolution was unanimously adopted reappointing the committee and authorising it to complete and publish the hymn-book within two years.

About this time the union sentiment, which had slumbered since the first General Conference in 1874, began to show signs of returning animation, and the sentiment was further quickened by the Methodist Œcumenical Conference which met in London in 1881. In that Conference universal Methodism was represented,

and the undisturbed harmony of the proceedings proclaimed the essential oneness of all who bore the Methodist name. Still there were some—perhaps many—who felt that so long as Methodists were divided into many bodies for no better reason, for the most part, than some slight difference in church government and administration, the affirmation that "the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination to remain so," was but an empty boast, and these returned from the Conference prepared to sympathise with any effort toward unification. In connexion with each of the Canadian Methodist churches there were standing Union Committees, but for several years no meetings had been held. In the meantime, however, the interchange of fraternal addresses and the visits of fraternal delegations did much to strengthen sentiments of amity and prepare the way for definite action when the proper time should arrive.

By the beginning of 1882 a spirit was abroad in the churches which made it impossible to longer ignore the union question. But between the former movement and this there was one point of difference. Proposals for the first union originated with the ministers, and it was chiefly on their initiative and by their advocacy that it was carried through; but in regard to the later movement a strong desire for an undivided Methodism seemed to spring up spontaneously among the people, while its staunchest opponents were to be found in the ranks of the ministry. At this time laymen had not yet been admitted to membership in the Annual Conferences, and in the Conference debates the ministerial element alone appeared. This of itself is sufficient to account for the fact that when the

second basis was under discussion it was defeated by a small majority in one Annual Conference, and carried by only a small majority in another. When it came before the courts of the Church in which the laity predominated (quarterly meetings) and in district meetings and General Conference where they were present in equal numbers with the ministers, a different result was obtained. To the credit of the opposing ministers be it said, that when union was carried they loyally accepted the situation, and co-operated most heartily in the future work of the Church.

In 1882 a number of resolutions and memorials on the subject of union were sent up to the General Conference of the Methodist Church and referred to a committee. At a subsequent stage the committee reported that resolutions had been received from eleven district meetings, from the tenor of which it appeared that there was a very general desire on the part of both ministers and laymen "to see the several bodies of Methodists in this country brought into more intimate and friendly relationship with one another; and that they would be glad, if it could be effected without the sacrifice of anything essential to the integrity and efficiency of Methodism as a whole, that they should be brought into organic union." The committee was also gratified to learn that the feeling in favour of union was "very generally shared by the other Methodist churches of the country," as evidenced by the fact that resolutions expressive of an earnest desire for union had been "passed by fourteen Quarterly Conferences and by the three Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and by at least one quarterly board and by two district meetings of the Primitive Methodist body." Besides this,

two mixed conventions had been held in the interests of Methodist union. In view of all these circumstances, and the prospect of a speedy opening of the great North-West, the committee considered the time opportune for the consideration of the union question, and summed up their judgment in the following deliverance:

"Your committee therefore commend the matter of Methodist union to the sympathetic and prayerful attention of our ministers and people. We believe the frank and courteous discussion of it can scarcely fail to be attended with beneficial results; and although we do not close our eyes to the practical difficulties which lie in the way of the consummation of such a union as is desired—a union which will make the Methodism of Canada one in form, as we believe it to be one in spirit—we do know that, in answer to our united prayers, wisdom will be given by which these difficulties will be overcome, and a consummation so devoutly to be wished will be secured." The report concluded by recommending the question to the favourable consideration of the approaching General Conference. It is noteworthy that the London and Montreal Conferences gave no deliverance on the subject. This may have been due to a conviction that the time had not come for expressing a decided opinion, but it was an open secret that in these two Conferences the feeling in favour of union was far less decided than in the Toronto Conference; and this probably accounts for the fact that no action was taken in the district meetings.

The General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada met in the city of Hamilton on the 6th of September 1882, and the General Conference of the Methodist

Episcopal Church met in the same city at the same time. It was ascertained, also, that arrangements had been made for the Union Committees of the Primitive Methodist and Bible Christian Churches to assemble in Hamilton at the same date for conference with other bodies in the interest of union. It was evident, therefore, that this was now a live question that could not be ignored, nor could it be settled by vague resolutions that meant nothing. A time had arrived when a simple yes or no would be demanded, for there was a general conviction that union must be now or never. At an early period in the sessions of the Conference of the Methodist Church a large committee was appointed to which all matters pertaining to union were referred. This committee met the committees of the other churches, and by a unanimous vote the discipline of the Methodist Church of Canada was accepted as a basis of negotiation. In reporting back to the Conference, the committee stated that in regard to doctrines, general rules, usages, and constitution of the lower courts, no difference of opinion was expressed, but that on some other points mutual concessions would be necessary, especially in regard to general superintendency and lay representation in the Annual Conferences. The representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church attached great importance to the principle of superintendency, but not necessarily in the form to which they had been accustomed. The representatives of the Primitive and Bible Christian Churches, while not advocating the principle, were willing to concede it, provided the other bodies would concede the principle of lay representation in the Annual Conferences in some form. The General Con-

ference accepted the principle of lay representation, "provided no change is made in regard to the examination of ministerial character or the composition of the Stationing Committee"; also the principle of an itinerant general superintendency, "provided the duties and powers of the office are so defined as to prevent interference with the duties and powers of Annual Conference officers or of church courts." The next step was the appointment of a large committee of forty-two members "to meet the committees of the other churches in the city of Toronto on the last Tuesday in November." The last two recommendations of the committee's report, as adopted by the Conference, indicate that the union of the various bodies was regarded as a foregone conclusion:

"That should the present committee agree as to the details of a basis of union, the plan agreed upon shall be submitted to the quarterly boards for approval or otherwise, at the next February quarterly meetings, and also to the next ensuing Annual Conferences.

"It is further recommended that the superintendents of circuits be required to report immediately to the Secretary of the General Conference the vote of the quarterly meetings, and should it be found that two thirds of the quarterly meetings, and also a majority of the Annual Conferences voting thereon, have declared in favour of the plan of union proposed by the joint committee, the President of the General Conference shall convene the General Conference in order to give effect to the proposed union; said meeting of the General Conference to be held subsequently to the meeting of the Annual Conferences."

In accordance with the understanding arrived at

between the representatives of the various Methodist bodies, the joint Committee on Union assembled in the Carlton Street Primitive Methodist Church, Toronto, at the date agreed upon, and organised by appointing Bishop Carman, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Chairman, and the Rev. A. Sutherland, of the Methodist Church of Canada, Secretary. It is not necessary to follow in detail the work of the committee. Suffice it to say that the sessions from first to last were characterised by harmony and brotherly love. Differences of opinion there were on some points, but they were treated with mutual respect, and the spirit of conciliation which seemed to animate all the members enabled the committee to reach unanimous conclusions on all important points. The decisions of the committee were then formulated in a distinct basis of union, covering doctrine, general rules, ordinances, church government, church property, church funds, book and publishing interests, educational interests, and sundry miscellaneous recommendations. The basis thus adopted was printed and published throughout the several Connexions. In due time it was laid before the quarterly meetings, not for revision or amendment, but for an answer to the question, Are you willing, for the sake of union, to accept the basis agreed upon by the joint committee? It was also sent forward to the various Annual Conferences, so that there might be the fullest possible discussion of every point before a final decision was reached. The answer from the quarterly meetings, which was given in February 1883, was overwhelmingly in favour of the measure, making it clear that the laity desired union, and were willing to make all needful concessions in order to secure it.

The basis of union was now the absorbing topic of conversation in Methodist circles, and the approaching sessions of the Annual Conferences were looked forward to with intense interest. The laity had spoken with no uncertain sound, but it was known that strong prejudices existed among the ministers, and while some were enthusiastically in favour of the measure, others were just as strongly opposed. If the Annual Conferences should assume a hostile attitude, the scheme would be imperilled, and the good ship Union, that had been launched under favourable auspices and steered safely thus far past rocks and shoals, might after all be wrecked at the harbour's mouth. The bare possibility of such a contingency gave rise to feelings of deep concern in many minds, for it was clearly seen that a collision between ministers and people on so important a question would be a great calamity, and many earnest prayers went up to God that He would rule and overrule in the whole matter.

The Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church of Canada were accustomed to meet, as regards time, in the following order: Montreal, London, Toronto, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland. In the first instance, therefore, attention was turned to the Montreal Conference, which assembled in the city of Ottawa on the 30th of May 1883. Day by day the papers were eagerly scanned for accounts of the proceedings, and when the debate on union closed, and it was announced that the basis had been adopted by a majority of only fifteen votes out of a total of one hundred and seventeen, any feeling of relief that was experienced was not very profound. Next in order came the London Conference, which assembled in the

city of St. Catharines on the 6th of June, and continued in session for nine days. Here, as at Ottawa, the absorbing topic was the basis of union, and in this Conference some of the staunchest opponents of the measure were to be found. As the debate proceeded it became evident the vote would be a very close one, and it was doubtful which way the scale would turn. On the eighth day the discussion closed, and when it was announced that the basis had been rejected by a majority of thirteen out of a total vote of one hundred and eighty-nine little surprise was felt or expressed.

When the action of the London Conference became known, public attention at once centred on Peterborough, where the Toronto Conference had assembled on the 13th of June, the day before the vote in London Conference was taken. The situation as regarded union was now felt to be not only serious but extremely critical, and it is not surprising that many were saying, "As goes Toronto Conference, so goes the Connexion." Those who spoke in this way did not forget that the Maritime Conferences were yet to be heard from; but it was understood that they were less deeply concerned in the union movement than were the Conferences farther west, because they had not experienced the evil effects of a divided Methodism. It was probable, therefore, that their action would be determined, to some extent, by the attitude of the Conferences in Ontario and Quebec; and as the basis had been carried in one Conference by the slender majority of fifteen, and defeated by an almost similar majority in another, unless Toronto Conference gave a much larger majority in favour than many expected, and larger than some thought possible,

the union might be regarded as effectually buried, never to rise again. Under these circumstances the debate in the Toronto Conference began and was continued from day to day by men who spoke under a sense of deep responsibility. At first it was not easy to tell to which side the feeling of the Conference inclined, for every speaker received an attentive hearing, and every good point, on either side, received a generous meed of applause. But as time went on it became manifest that the arguments for union were beginning to tell, for the applause which had greeted opponents of the measure gradually ebbed away until it seemed to be confined to a group of stalwarts who surrounded their leader in one corner of the church, while enthusiasm on the other side gathered strength with every passing hour, and culminated on the evening when the debate closed.

When the theme had been pretty well exhausted, and nearly all had spoken who desired to do so, an understanding was reached that on a given evening the debate on the floor of the Conference should cease, after which those who had moved or seconded resolutions or amendments might be heard if they so desired, the discussion to be closed by the mover of the main resolution for the adoption of the basis, and then the vote should be taken. When the evening arrived the profound interest felt in the union question was evidenced by the immense audience, representing all denominations, which packed the large George Street Church "from floor to ceiling," most of whom listened with unabated attention until the vote was called at one o'clock in the morning. While the utmost freedom had been allowed during the debate it was tacitly

agreed that when the vote was taken there should be no demonstration, but that the announcement should be received by the Conference in solemn silence and with heads bowed in prayer. At length the roll was called and the yeas and nays recorded, when it was found that the vote stood one hundred and thirty-seven to thirty-seven, or one hundred of a majority in favour of adopting the union basis. Twenty years have passed away since that memorable evening, but there are persons not a few among the older generation of Methodists in and around Peterborough whose manner grows animated and whose eyes kindle as they recall "that wonderful debate on the union question."

It was now generally conceded that the Toronto Conference had "saved the day," and that the basis was safe. This hopeful feeling was strengthened when it became known that the Conferences of other uniting bodies had adopted the basis, and that their quarterly meetings had given large majorities in its favour. Still later the Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland Conferences put themselves on record in favour of union, thus increasing considerably the majority vote. Last of all, the Manitoba Conference, which had just been organised and held its first session in August of that year, adopted the basis by a unanimous vote. Still, it could not be said that the measure was entirely safe. It had yet to pass the ordeal of a special session of the General Conference; for although that session had been authorised for the sole purpose of "giving effect to the union," it was anticipated that the opponents of the measure would insist upon another discussion of the whole question, and would be prepared,

if they could rally a sufficient minority, to block the whole movement at the eleventh hour. When the Conference assembled this anticipation was fully realised, and it was evident that the subject that had already been threshed out to the last straw would have to be gone over again, and subjected to the test of another vote. Further discussion might properly have been resisted on technical grounds, and there were some who thought that further discussion was out of order, as the Conference had been called together "to give effect to the union"; but the union leaders judged it best to concede the demand for free discussion, so that no possible ground of complaint might remain.

In accordance with the decision of the General Conference of 1882, the special session was held in the Bridge Street Church in the city of Belleville, and began on the 5th of September 1883.* As the basis of union was the only subject that could be discussed, it was thought that preliminaries could be quickly disposed of; but quite a number of technical objections were raised, and discussion on these occupied the whole of the first day. During these discussions a resolution was adopted that the basis of union be the order of the day at ten o'clock the following morning, and notice was given that at that time a resolution would be moved to accept and ratify the said basis. When the Conference assembled on Thursday 6th September, the President—Rev. Dr. Rice—made a general statement respecting apprehended legal difficulties, and the steps which he had taken to secure competent legal advice. The Secretary of the Conference then read the opinion of Mr. John E. Rose, Q.C. After further dis-

*cf. pp349f. On the basis of p 356 this date appears incorrect. It should read Aug. 29

cussion, the opinion of Mr. James Bethune, Q.C., based upon a case submitted by a private member of the Conference, was also read. Preliminaries being thus disposed of, the way was open for the main question, and the battle was fairly joined. It was not to be expected that anything new in the way of argument would be advanced. In newspaper controversy and Conference debates every phase of the question had been gone over many times; but the interest felt in the measure was so great that old arguments were listened to as eagerly as if heard for the first time, and sentiments that had been worn threadbare by frequent repetition received generous recognition.

The order of the day having been called, the Rev. A. Sutherland, Secretary of the Joint Committee on Union, arose amid profound silence and strained attention to move the adoption of the basis. The motion, which was seconded by Rev. E. B. Ryckman, M.A., was as follows:

"Whereas this Conference, at its session in the city of Hamilton in September 1882, adopted certain resolutions affirming the desirableness of an organic union of the various Methodist churches in the Dominion, and did appoint a committee to meet in joint session with similar committees appointed by the Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal, Primitive Methodist, and Bible Christian Churches, for the purpose of preparing, if possible, a basis of union to be afterwards submitted to the quarterly boards and Conferences of the negotiating churches for approval or otherwise:

"And whereas this Conference agreed to meet at the call of the President, if there were received from two thirds of the quarterly meetings and a majority of the

Annual Conferences voting upon it declarations in favour of the plan of union, and declared that the President should convene the General Conference at Belleville in order to give effect to the proposed union:

"And whereas the official returns show that six hundred and forty quarterly boards out of seven hundred and forty-nine, and six out of seven Annual Conferences have declared in favour of the plan of union submitted;

"Therefore this General Conference, recognising the guiding hand of God in the movement, and feeling its obligation to give effect to the wish of the Church as expressed through the quarterly meetings and Annual Conferences, hereby accepts and ratifies the basis recommended by the joint committee as a basis of union with the Methodist Episcopal, Primitive Methodist, and Bible Christian Churches."

The mover having spoken briefly in support of the resolution, the Rev. John A. Williams, D.D., moved the following amendment, which was seconded by the Rev. William Williams:

"That we hail with great satisfaction and pleasure the tendency and desire of the several Methodist churches of this country to form one organic body if a basis can be found that will carry a majority of the ministers and members of said churches. In relation to the basis of union now presented to this Conference, we express our deep regret that it contains certain provisions which we cannot see our way clear to accept, and in addition to these we fear that certain complications in relation to at least one of the churches proposing to unite make it extremely hazardous to consummate the union until

further information has been obtained as to the effect of the action of the parent body of said church in England upon titles to property involved. With respect to the general superintendency, we declare our willingness to accept it in harmony with the principles laid down by the General Conference in the amendment to the report of the Union Committee; with the understanding, furthermore, that the restrictive rules shall not be omitted from the constitution of the united Church, that grave legal questions shall be settled prior to the consummation of the union, and that the principle of the amendment above referred to affecting the general superintendency shall be adopted, we heartily express our readiness to enter into union with other Methodist bodies at as early a date as may be found practicable."

On the submission of the resolution and amendment there followed a debate never excelled and but rarely equalled in any ecclesiastical assembly. It was a veritable "battle of the giants," where "Greek met Greek" in high debate on a question that vitally affected the future of Methodism in the Dominion of Canada, and perhaps throughout the world. For the most part the spirit of the debate was admirable; and if there were moments when it grew somewhat acrimonious, the heat could be excused on the ground of the interests at stake, and the fact that each member of the Conference felt personally interested in the issue. They were not contending in academic debate for or against abstract propositions; they were dealing with questions that touched the fundamentals of church organisation and invaded that region of sentiment and historic association that is so potent a force in determin-

ing great issues. By tacit consent it devolved upon the Rev. A. Sutherland, as Secretary of the Union Committee, to move the adoption of the basis, and as he had been from the first a pronounced advocate of union he had to bear the brunt of assaults from the other side. The phrase "by tacit consent" is strictly correct, for no plans were laid by the advocates of union as to how the debate should be conducted. They were so deeply convinced that the union movement was under divine guidance that they feared to mar it by plans of worldly wisdom. So tenaciously was this thought adhered to that five minutes before the Secretary rose to move the adoption of the basis he did not know by whom his motion would be seconded. The opposition to the basis was led by the Rev. Dr. John A. Williams, and right ably and manfully did he discharge what he felt to be a duty. But it was uphill work, for from the first it was evident he was fighting a losing battle, and that union was a foregone conclusion.

The debate continued for five days, and the interest grew as the days went by; but it culminated on the last evening, when, in accordance with previous agreement, the debate on the floor of the Conference was to close at a given hour, after which Dr. Williams and Mr. Sutherland were to be heard, and then the vote would be taken. At an early hour representatives from all denominations in the city, and others from great distances in the country round about, began to assemble, and long before the time for opening the last stage of the debate arrived, the spacious church was crowded to its utmost capacity by the most deeply interested audience that ever assembled

within its walls. The devotional services were solemn and impressive, for everyone seemed to feel that the occasion was one of no ordinary kind, and that momentous issues were at stake. The debate which ensued was fully up to the level of the previous discussions, and maintained the high reputation of the Conference as a deliberative assembly; but when the debate on the floor closed, and Dr. Williams arose to speak, the strained attention of the vast audience grew almost painful in its intensity. In an able address of nearly an hour's duration, Dr. Williams recapitulated the arguments against the basis of union, and made an earnest appeal in favour of delay, and when he finished it was felt that the last word on that side had been spoken.

At this juncture, however, a somewhat dramatic incident occurred. As already stated, it had been agreed that an address from Dr. Williams and one from Mr. Sutherland should close the debate; but as soon as the former ceased speaking there were calls from various parts of the Conference for Dr. Douglas. The Doctor was known to be a pronounced opponent of union, and it was understood that his room at the hotel was the regular meeting-place of those who sympathised with his views when discussing their plans for carrying on the debate. As a minister honoured and beloved his influence was great, and it was felt by some that to call upon him at this critical stage in the discussion, in face of the agreement that had been reached, was tantamount to a breach of faith. But the unionists sat in silence, making no sign, and, though evidently averse to speaking, Dr. Douglas at length arose. In breathless attention the

audience waited, and at first could hardly believe their ears. "Mr. President," said the Doctor,—and his massive voice and impressive manner carried his words to the remotest corner of the building,—"the solemnities of this hour, the tremendous responsibilities of the undying future, alike call upon the Church to—ADVANCE!" Under other circumstances the effect would have been electrical, and the friends of union would have been elated beyond measure; but such a sense of a divine Presence overruling and directing in the matter pervaded the assembly, that no demonstrations of applause greeted the announcement, though from more than one delegate came a subdued but fervent "Thank God!" After this it was with a sense of relief that the audience settled back in their seats while the mover of the main resolution recapitulated the arguments in favour of union, answered the more prominent objections, and made his final appeal for the ratification of the basis.

Then came the voting. Those in favour of the basis first arose and remained standing while the Secretary from the platform called their names and they were checked off on the Conference Roll, when each delegate in turn resumed his seat. The opposing vote was taken in the same way, and all in solemn silence, the only sound being the voice of the Secretary calling the names. A few moments sufficed to tabulate the result, after which it was announced that the vote stood 123 to 38; or, in other words, that the basis had been ratified by a three-fourths majority, with several votes to spare. Even then no applause was indulged in, for the unionists felt it would be unbrotherly to triumph over opponents who had only

followed their convictions of duty. But when the doxology had been sung and the benediction pronounced, the tension relaxed. The audience broke up into groups, tongues were loosed, and congratulations, thanksgivings, and hearty hand-shakes (some of the most cordial being between those who but a little while before had been ranged on opposite sides) became the order of the hour. No wonder there was a profound sense of relief. The long and exciting struggle was over. The era of division and estrangement was ended, and the era of union had come. Nothing now remained but for the United General Conference to assemble and adopt a constitution and formulate a discipline for the United Church. And this would be done on the day after the morrow.

Wednesday morning, 5th September 1883,* dawned bright and fair, and the very skies seemed to smile upon the assembled delegates as they wended their way to the Methodist Episcopal Tabernacle, where the first United Conference was to be held. The hymn beginning,

> O for a thousand tongues to sing
> My great Redeemer's praise,

was sung with subdued and tender feeling, a portion of Scripture was read, and the Rev. Dr. John A. Williams led the Conference in prayer. At once a divine influence came down upon that good man, and out of the fulness of his heart came forth a prayer that is treasured in the memory of those who heard it to this day. If misgivings yet lingered in any minds, they vanished in the hallowed atmosphere of the mercy-seat, and few, if any, could resist

* C.E. p 342.

the conclusion that the union which had been ratified on earth was also ratified in heaven.

The devotional service being ended, the delegates proceeded to organise, and by a unanimous vote Dr. John A. Williams was chosen President of the first United General Conference. The remaining sessions, extending over fifteen days, were occupied in formulating a discipline for the united body. On the seventh day the election of permanent officers took place, when the Rev. S. D. Rice, D.D., and the Rev. A. Carman, D.D., were chosen General Superintendents, the first for eight years, the second for four. On Wednesday afternoon, 19th September, this historic General Conference—the most important yet held in the history of the United Church —was brought to a close. Since that day Canadian Methodism has been one from ocean to ocean, and one it is destined, I think, to remain. Strife and division are things of the past that have almost entirely faded out of memory, and a new generation has come up to whom the distinctive names of the former time are unmeaning words. There is peace within our walls and prosperity within our palaces. Upon all our assemblies may the Shekinah evermore abide.

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